MONTANA

PROPOSED WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

DECISION

OVERTHRUST BELT LANDS ACCELERATED

INTENSIVE INVENTORY, BUTTE DISTRICT

September 1979

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MONTANA STATE OFFICE
P.O. BOX 30157
222 NORTH 32nd STREET
BILLINGS, MONTANA 59107

M668
1979

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1979

Introduction

This document contains summaries of the intensive inventory forms prepared for those Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered lands included in the Rocky Mountain Overthrust Belt. The narratives follow the format provided in Appendixes 5 and 6 of the Wilderness Inventory Handbook, dated September 27, 1978.

The Overthrust Belt refers to a complex formation of sedimentary rock found in the Rocky Mountains from Alaska to Mexico. In the lower 48 contiguous states, the Belt includes western Montana, an area along the Wyoming-Idaho border and extends south into Utah, Nevada and Arizona.

The Overthrust Belt involves public lands within the Butte BLM District in Montana. The inventory of these lands is being conducted in advance of the statewide wilderness inventory in order to reduce potential resource management conflicts. With the increased national need for energy production, it is expected that this zone will be subjected to renewed energy-related exploration activities. A final decision is needed soon to identify those public lands containing wilderness characteristics which will be reported to Congress and those lands which will be dropped from further wilderness consideration.

The Process and Your Participation

This inventory decision is the result of an intensive field inventory conducted by BLM personnel this past summer. The conclusions represent a proposed wilderness study area decision. This decision is the next to the last step in the inventory phase of wilderness consideration. The release of this information is being followed by a 75-day public comment period extending from September 24 through December 7, 1979. A final wilderness study area decision will be made and publicly announced by the Montana State BLM Director after analysis of the public comments. The most helpful comments should deal with the accuracy of inventory information and the wilderness characteristics discussed.

Write: Wilderness
Bureau of Land Management
Montana State Office
P.O. Box 30157
222 North 32nd Street
Billings, Montana 59107

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More detailed inventory unit narratives are available for public review at the following BLM offices:

Butte District Office
106 N. Parkmont
Butte, Montana 59701

Dillon Resource Area Office
Ibey Bldg. N. Dillon
Dillon, Montana 59725

Garnet Resource Area Office
1819 Holburn
Missoula, Montana 59806

Public meetings to discuss these inventory results have also been scheduled at the following locations:

(All meetings scheduled from 7-9:30 p.m.)

Location	Date
Missoula--Village Red Lion Motor Inn, Russell Room	October 15
Drummond--Drummond Public School	October 16
Sheridan, MT--All Purpose Room, Cafeteria, Sheridan Public School	October 16
Dillon--St. Rose Family Center	October 17
Lima--Multi-Purpose Room Lima Public School	October 18
Butte--New BLM Office, 106 N. Parkmont	October 22
Bozeman--Topper Motel	October 23
Helena--Travelodge, Rimini Room	October 24
Great Falls--Heritage Inn, Venice-Paris Room	October 29
Choteau--Choteau Public Library	October 30

Wilderness Characteristics Narrative

Summaries

* These narratives have been prepared by using the format provided in Appendixes 5 and 6 of the Wilderness Inventory Handbook of September 27, 1978. A cover memorandum is attached to those narratives where a proposed decision has resulted in a change from the recommendations of the inventory teams.

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-001

Unit Name Ruby Mountain

1. Physical Description:

The Ruby Mountain unit is located fifteen miles east of Dillon and two miles west of Alder, Montana. Access to the area is available from the east and west via public and private roads.

The unit is bounded by private and state lands on the north, east and west sides. The southern boundary was initially formed by private lands and the Cottonwood Creek Road. The original inventory unit contained 32,000 acres of public, roadless land, 2,240 acres of private inholdings and 1,280 acres of State land.

During the intensive inventory one major boundary adjustment was made in the southern portion of the unit. Approximately 5,643.5 acres were deleted due to a heavy concentration of on-site imprints combined with adjacent off-site intrusions. These human impacts both past and present, have a substantial influence on the apparent naturalness and solitude of the area.

The new boundaries enclose 26,356.5 acres of public, roadless land, 640 acres of state land and 960 acres of private inholdings.

2. Naturalness:

The Ruby Mountain Unit is dominated by a northsouth ridge line and the perpendicular drainage of Garden Creek. It is an area of great diversity with sagebrush grasses (25%), Douglas fir, Limber pine and Aspen forests (75%), green meadows, perennial streams, dry canyons to the north and lush drainages to the south, sheer cliffs, and mountains of variable heights and slopes. Elevations range from a low of 5,250 feet near the east to a high of 9,391 feet at the summit of Ruby Mountain in the northcentral portion of the unit. The unit appears to have been primarily affected by the forces of nature.

There is, however, one major impact on the overall naturalness of the unit. This is a bladed, cattle driveway which extends one mile in length. A portion of this intrusion is highly visible due to its mountain side location and lack of vegetative screening. Rehabilitation would be timely but is feasible through hand labor.

Other impacts of lesser signficance include five miles of fence, roughly thirteen miles of vehicle ways, four inconspicuous watering tanks, an inactive prospect pit of about a quarter acre in size, two isolated corrals, a tin shack and a small, wooden shed. All of these human imprints could be rehabilitated through natural processes and hand labor.

Although there are impacts within the area, neither their individual nor cumulative impact is great enough to significantly affect the overall, apparent naturalness of the Ruby Mountain Unit. In sum, the area appears primarily natural due to its size, screening qualities and outstanding, physical attributes.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The Ruby Mountain Unit provides outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Vegetative screening and topographic diversity is excellent throughout the area, creating conditions whereby visitors can easily avoid the sights and sounds of others within the area.

While the natural character of the landscape helps to create outstanding opportunities for solitude, it offers the potential for superb hiking, backpacking, cross-county skiing and snowshoeing experiences. Additional activities available are elk and mule deer hunting, trout fishing along Trout Creek, horseback riding, photography, nature study and rock scrambling along the rock cliffs and talus slopes throughout the north portion of the unit.

4. Supplemental Values:

The Ruby Mountain unit contains supplemental values in the form of unique geological, ecological, scenic and historical features.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

The Ruby Mountain Unit is recommended for classification as a Wilderness Study Area. It fulfills all the criteria found in Section 2C of the 1964 Wilderness Act. It meets the size criteria, appears primarily natural, possesses outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation, and in addition has high supplemental values.

Bradley Rixford — 08-31-79

John Puncince — 08-31-79

Staff Signatures — Date

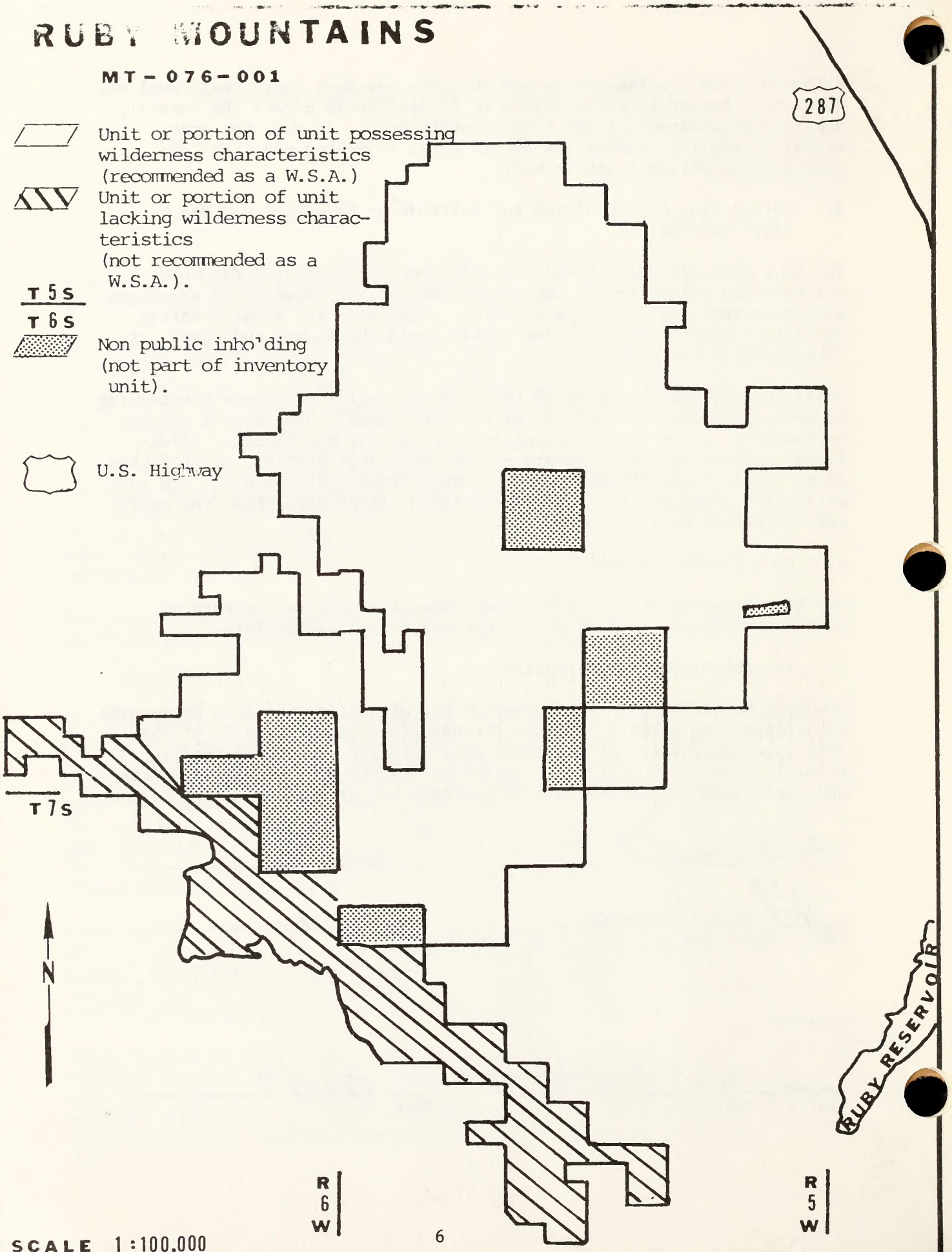
Approval

[signature] — 8/31/79

District Manager — Date

RUBY MOUNTAINS

MT-076-001



Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.)

Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

Non public inho'ding (not part of inventory unit).

U.S. Highway

SCALE 1:100,000

United States Department of the Interior

IN REPLY REFER TO
8500

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
District Office
Box 308
Butte, Montana 59701

August 31, 1979

Memorandum

To: State Director, Montana

From: District Manager, Butte

Subject: Step 4, Intensive Inventory, Wilderness Review

There are two boundary modifications in Unit 002, Blacktail Mountains, that eliminates 2,178 acres. First, 1,460 acres south of Section 8, T. 10 S., R. 8 W. are excluded based on a lack of either outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. I thought that there was neither vegetative nor topographic screening in this area to create outstanding opportunities for solitude. The area also does not have a diversity of primitive recreation activities or one outstanding activity.

Second, 698 acres were dropped due to a lack of apparent naturalness. This area is that portion circumscribed by the road corridor in Section 30, 31, T. 9 S., R. 8 W. and Section 6, T. 10 S., R. 8 W; thence that portion east of road corridor in Section 31, T. 9 S., R. 8 W; thence from end of road north along section line between Sections 1 and 6, T. 10 S., R. 8 W. This area shows the influence of man in the forms of a road that can be seen from within the excluded unit, a sheep camp, spring development, and old logging. The cumulative effect of these impacts is enough to affect the apparent naturalness of the area.

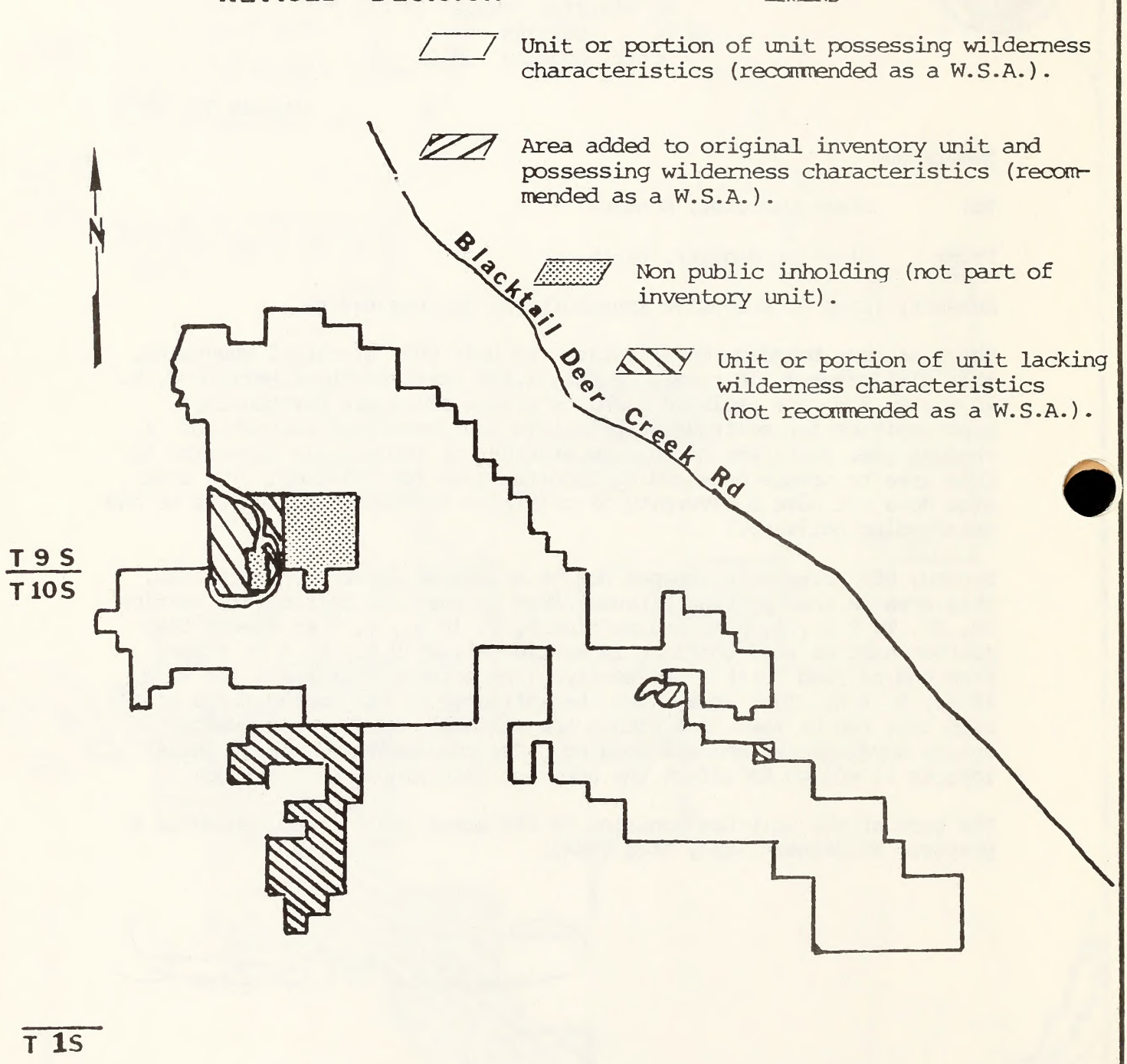
The rest of the unit now contains 19,189 acres and is recommended as a proposed Wilderness Study Area (WSA).

CONSERVE AMERICA'S ENERGY

Save Energy and You Serve America!

BLACKTAIL MOUNTAINS
MT-076-002

REVISED DECISION


LEGEND
Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).
Area added to original inventory unit and possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).
Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
N
Blacktail Deer Creek Rd
T 9 S
T 10S
T 1S
R 9 R 3
R 7

Wilderness Characteristics

Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-002

Unit Name Blacktail Mountains

1. Physical Description:

The Blacktail Mountains inventory unit is 16 miles south of Dillon, Montana and encompasses most of the Blacktail Mountain Range. The central portion of the unit is approximately six miles wide; a narrow arm following the ridge to the southwest makes the unit almost twelve miles long. Elevations within the boundary rise from 6,200 feet at the base of Blacktail Ridge to the highest peak at 9,477 feet.

The boundary of the unit is comprised on all sides by interspersed private and State of Montana lands. There is no public access to the area at present. Within the boundary lies 22,215 acres of land, of which 125 acres are privately owned and 640 are State owned. Public lands total 21,450 acres.

Boundary modifications to the inventory unit were made to exclude significant mining site impacts and roads. These modifications removed a total of approximately 83 acres, reducing the inventory unit to 21,367 acres.

2. Naturalness:

The northeast face of this unit is a steep, timbered ridge rising to a series of high peaks. This face is extremely rugged, with numerous drainages descending in narrow canyons. There are cliffs along many of the canyons and some bare rock and talus associated with the highest peaks.

The west slope of the area is a high, gently rolling, open, sage plateau.

The area is primarily natural, with man's imprints almost entirely limited to the open, west slope. There is less than 13 miles of low impact vehicle ways, approximately four miles of fencing, five old cabins and three spring developments. Cattle grazing has had evident impact over much of the open area, especially in the southernmost portions. Vehicles and machinery associated with the enclosed private land affect apparent naturalness, however, topography limits this effect to the relatively small portion of the unit adjacent to these inholdings.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Opportunities for solitude within this area are outstanding. The fact that the unit encompasses essentially an entire mountain range, with numerous rugged drainages and dense stands of timber, assures a user the opportunity

to avoid the sights and sounds of others within the unit. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are outstanding. Timbered slopes, numerous sheer cliffs, deep canyons and impressive vistas provide outstanding opportunities for activities such as rock climbing, hiking and camping. In addition, the area is known for its excellent big game hunting.

4. Supplemental Features:

This unit provides important habitat for a variety of wildlife species, including deer, black bear, cougar, coyote, yellow-bellied marmot, golden eagles, and a wide diversity of small mammal species. Portions of the elk habitat in this area, including an important calving ground, have been designated as "crucial."

The area displays unique scenic values associated with its sheer cliffs and rock formations, and its off-site vistas from the five peaks of over 9,000 feet.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

This unit is recommended for wilderness study. The Blacktail Mountains generally appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. The vehicle ways, structures, and range developments that are within the boundary do not significantly detract from the basic primitive character of the area. The relatively large size of the inventory unit and the fact that it encompasses essentially an entire mountain range contributes to the outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation.

Philip K Cressman — AUGUST 27, 1979

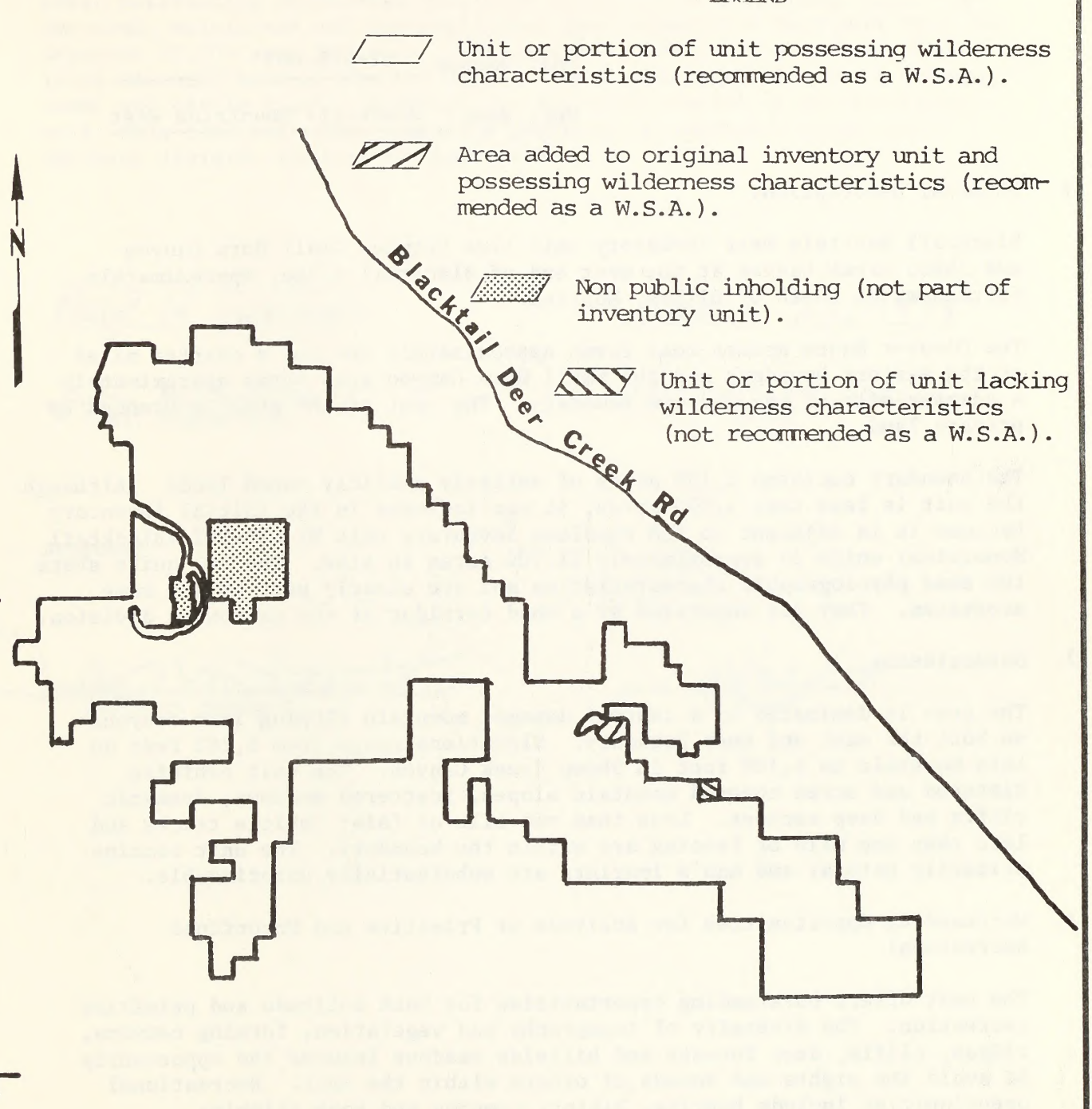
John K Merren — august 27, 1979

Staff Signatures — Dates

Approval

District Manager — Date

BLACKTAIL MOUNTAINS
MT-076-002


LEGEND
Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).
Area added to original inventory unit and possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).
Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
N
Blacktail Deer Creek Rd
T 9 S
T 10S
T 1S
R 9 W
R 8 W
R 7

Scale ½ inch: 1 mile

Wilderness Characteristics

Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-003

Unit Name Blacktail Mountains West

1. Physical Description:

Blacktail Mountain West inventory unit lies between Small Horn Canyon and Sheep Creek Canyon at the west end of Blacktail Ridge, approximately fifteen miles south of Dillon, Montana.

The Conover Ranch access road forms approximately one and a quarter miles of the eastern boundary and the Small Horn Canyon road forms approximately a quarter mile of the western boundary. The rest of the area is bounded by private land.

The boundary encloses 2,130 acres of entirely publicly owned lands. Although the unit is less than 5,000 acres, it was included in the initial inventory because it is adjacent to BLM roadless inventory unit MT-076-002 (Blacktail Mountains) which is approximately 21,700 acres in size. The two units share the same physiographic characteristics and are clearly part of the same ecosystem. They are separated by a road corridor at the narrowest division.

2. Naturalness:

The area is dominated by a central unnamed mountain sloping into canyons on both the east and west boundary. Elevations range from 8,282 feet on this mountain to 6,100 feet in Sheep Creek Canyon. The unit exhibits timbered and scree covered mountain slopes, scattered meadows, dramatic cliffs and deep canyons. Less than one mile of faint vehicle tracks and less than one mile of fencing are within the boundary. The unit remains primarily natural and man's imprints are substantially unnoticeable.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The unit offers outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive recreation. The diversity of topography and vegetation, forming canyons, ridges, cliffs, deep forests and hillside meadows insures the opportunity to avoid the sights and sounds of others within the unit. Recreational opportunities include hunting, hiking, camping and rock climbing.

4. Supplemental Values:

The eastern boundary of this unit displays 800 foot rock cliffs rising sharply out of Sheep Creek Canyon. These formations represent signigicant scenic value and are of geologic interest.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

The area is not recommended for wilderness study. Although the unit possesses outstanding wilderness qualities it is not of sufficient size. An improved, maintained and regularly used road separating this unit from the adjacent 21,700 acre inventory unit, accesses 400 acres of private land lying directly between the two units. The deeded land contains a working sheep and cattle ranch. Although the two areas represent one ecological unit, this road and ranch operation represent a substantial and overwhelming division between the two units.

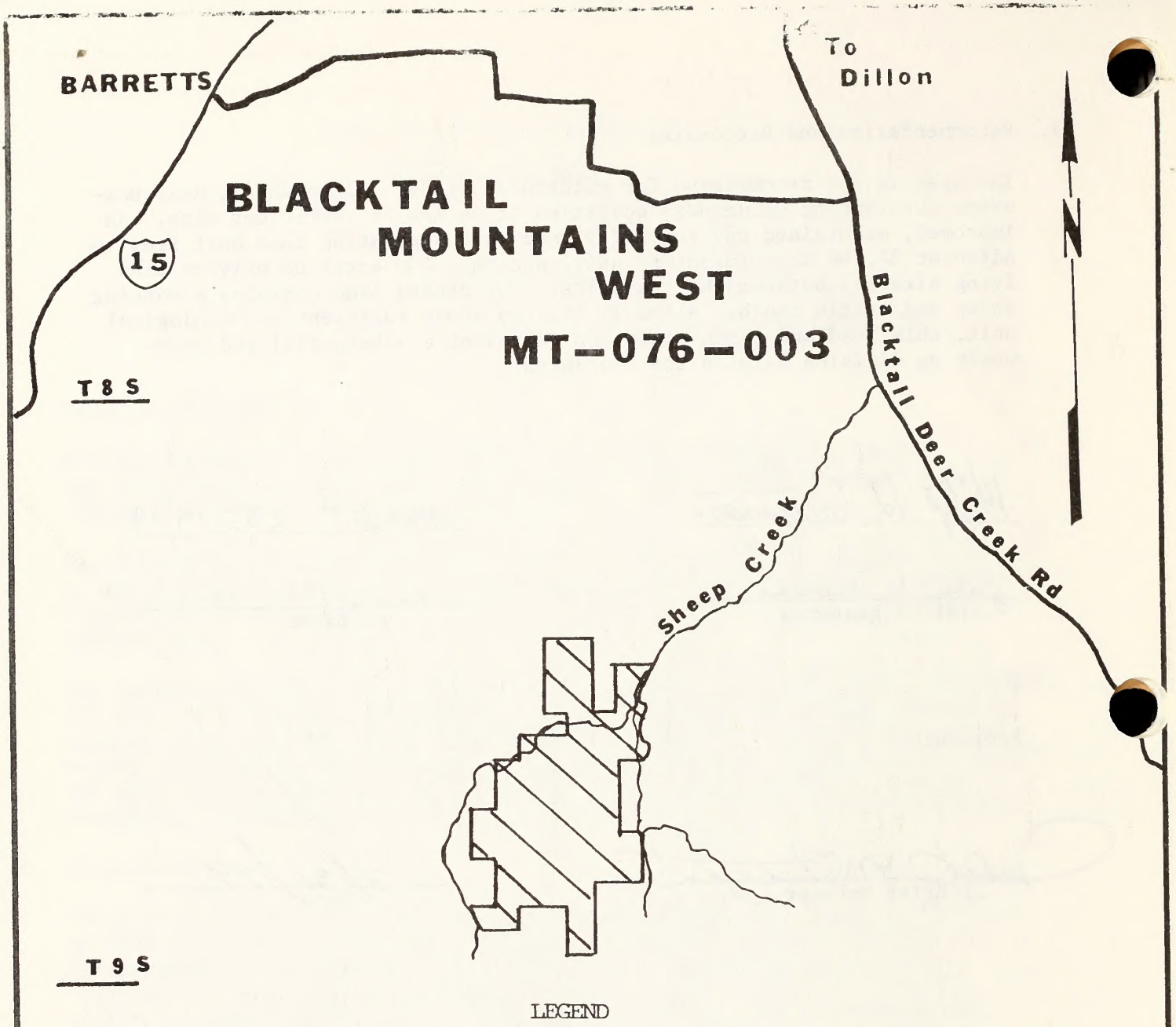
Philip L Crissman — AUGUST 23, 1979

John K. Mercer — August 23, 1979

Staff Signatures — Dates

Approval

District Manager — 8/31/79 Date



LEGEND

Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

Interstate Highway

R 9 W

R 8 W

Scale 1:100,000

IN REPLY REFER TO:

8500

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
District Office
Box 308
Butte, MT 59701

Memorandum

To: State Director, Montana

From: District Manager, Butte

Subject: Step 4, Intensive Inventory, Wilderness Review

The Big Springs Gulch area is a high open, sagebrush ridge that parallels Highway 15. This area has a crazy quilt boundary drawn to eliminate most of man's impacts on the land such as roads and fences. The result is a boundary that will be extremely difficult to administer. The ridge runs generally north and south with one drainage, all intermittant, running perpendicular to the ridge. The monotony of the terrain seriously detracts from the attractiveness of the area for a wilderness experience.

The area is crisscrossed with vehicle ways which originated from livestock management activities. Possibly the only reason roads were not constructed is because the terrain allows for open travel without roads.

These characteristics add no outstanding features to enhance the area and there are no endangered or unusual species of plants or wildlife.

Management of the area will probably remain the same regardless of the wilderness proposal. There are four private in-holdings that must have access. This in turn will further subvert wilderness values.

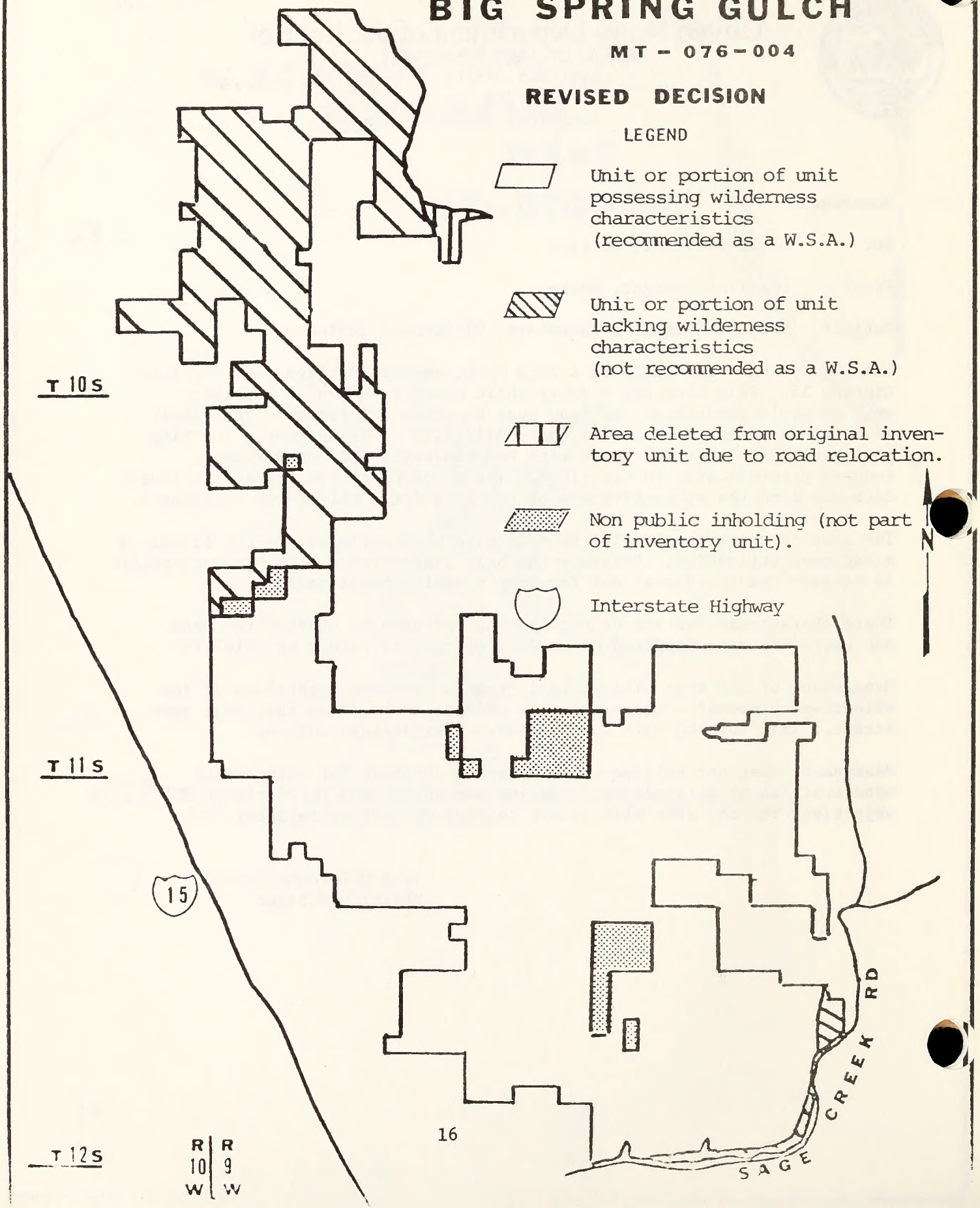
Management does not believe the area meets the test for outstanding opportunities or solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. MFP objectives for the area will assure control of further impacts.

Jack McIntosh
District Manager

BIG SPRING GULCH

MT - 076-004

REVISED DECISION


LEGEND
Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.)
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.)
Area deleted from original inventory unit due to road relocation.
Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
Interstate Highway
N
T 10 S
T 11 S
T 12 S
15
SAGE CREEK RD
R 10 W
R 9 W

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-004

Unit Name Big Spring Gulch

1. Physical Description:

The Big Spring Gulch Inventory Unit was originally composed of 43,060 acres of public land administered by the BLM. Boundaries have been extended to include acreage previously excluded by what were incorrectly classified as boundary "roads." The resulting total acreage was 43,327 roadless acres of public land. Of this, 5648.5 acres were eliminated due to the presence of substantial, humanly created impacts. The resulting acreage is a total of 37,578.5 roadless acres.

The Big Spring Gulch unit is located three miles northeast of Dell, Montana. Public access is via the Sage Creek County road. The unit is bounded by public, private, and state lands. Within the unit's boundaries are six parcels of non-public lands. Those parcels consist of 980 acres of private land, and 80 acres of state land.

2. Naturalness:

The Big Spring Gulch Unit is primarily a fifteen mile long, high, open ridge of grassland-sagebrush vegetation. The ridge extends generally north and south with extensive networks of drainages on both the eastern and western sides. Boundary changes were made in six places to exclude substantially noticeable imprints of human activity within the unit. All six changes were made due to the presence of powerlines. The resulting acreage remains with natural processes virtually unchanged. The area has been used primarily for livestock grazing, and there are a few minor impacts related to that use, i.e.: fences, spring developments, water troughs, and vehicular ways. Due to the isolated locations of these minor impacts, neither singly nor collectively do they detract from the overall naturalness of the unit.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are offered by the Big Spring Gulch Inventory Unit. The maze of drainages offer visitors a variety of routes, thus enabling dispersal of use throughout the unit. The numerous ridges additionally provide excellent screening between drainages.

The opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation available are hunting, hiking, and horseback riding. However, these activities are of a moderate, not outstanding quality.

4. Supplemental Values:

The unit supports populations of deer, elk, antelope, ruffed and sage-grouse, and eagles.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

The Big Spring Gulch Inventory Unit is recommended for further study as a WSA, with the boundary changes mentioned. The resulting 37,578.5 roadless acre area is primarily in a natural state and offers outstanding opportunities for solitude due to its topographic variety. The area also provides habitat for wildlife.

Richard E. Ward — 8/29/79

John D Humphreys — 8/30/79

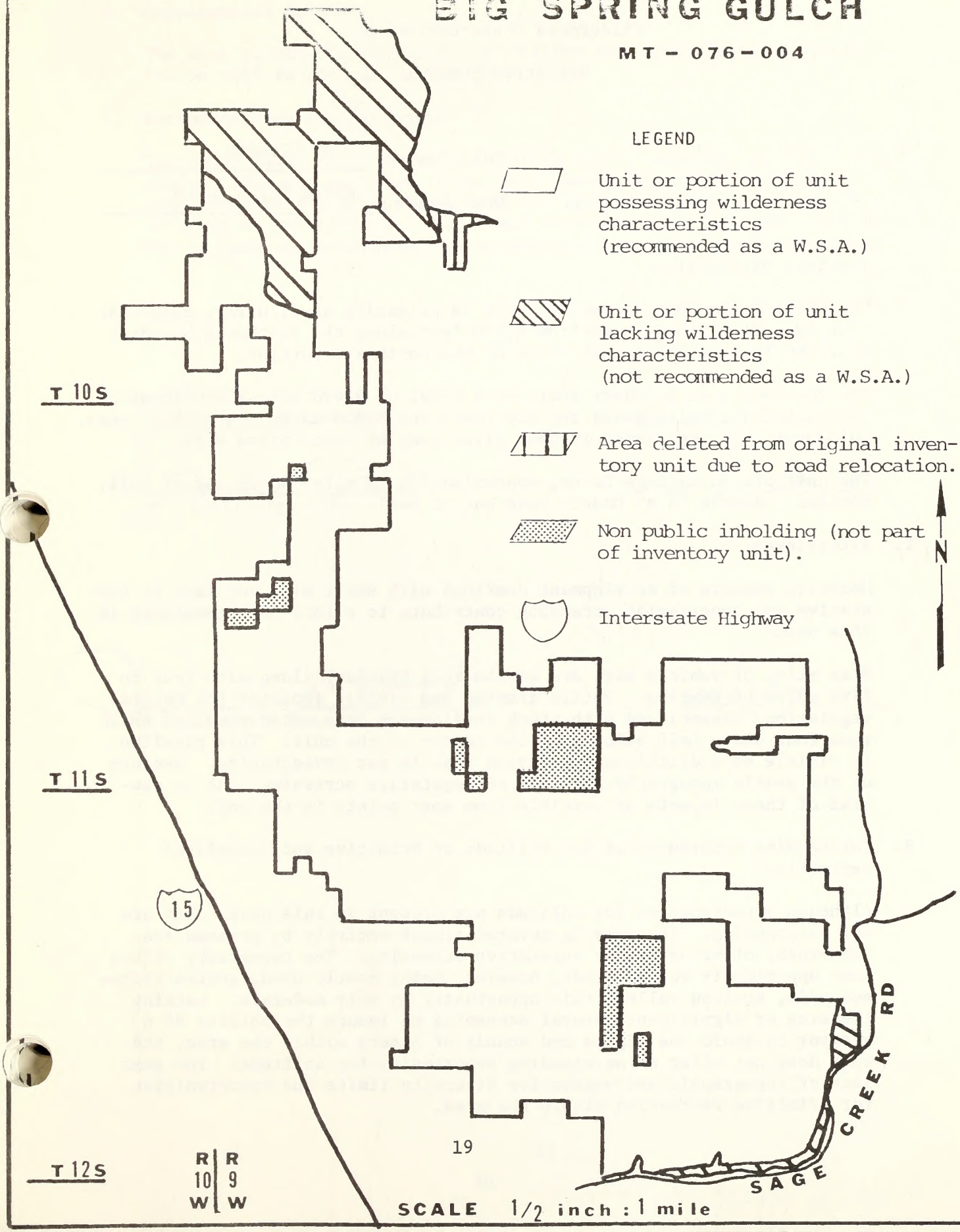
Signatures — Date

Approval

District Manager — Date

BIG SPRING GULCH

MT - 076-004


LEGEND
Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.)
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.)
Area deleted from original inventory unit due to road relocation.
Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
Interstate Highway
N
T 10 S
T 11 S
T 12 S
15
SAGE CREEK RD
R 10 W
R 9 W
SCALE 1/2 inch : 1 mile

Wilderness Characteristics

Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-006

Unit Name White Hills South

1. Physical Description:

The White Hills South inventory unit is primarily open, hilly, sagebrush country. Elevations range from 6,400 feet along the southwest boundary to 7,760 feet on the grassy ridge of the northeast portion.

The roadless area boundary encloses a total of 9,490 acres; 640 acres of this total are State owned and the remaining 8,850 acres are public lands. This unit runs approximately four miles long by three miles wide.

The unit overlooks Sage Creek, approximately 12 miles northeast of Dell, Montana. Access is by County road out of Dell.

2. Naturalness:

Moderate amounts of development combined with small size and lack of vegetative and topographic screening contribute to a lack of naturalness in this unit.

Nine miles of vehicle ways are within this boundary along with four to five miles of fencing. Cattle grazing has visibly impacted the natural vegetation. Associated with stock development is a water pipeline which runs four and a half miles thru the center of the unit. This pipeline is visible as a ditchline depression that is not revegetating. Because of the gentle topography and lack of vegetative screening, one or several of these impacts are visible from most points in the unit.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Although opportunities for solitude are present in this unit, they are not outstanding. The area is covered almost entirely by grasses and sagebrush, offering little vegetative screening. The topography offers some opportunity for solitude, however, being mostly open, gentle ridges and wide, shallow valleys this opportunity is only moderate. Lacking the size or significant natural screening to insure the ability of a visitor to avoid the sights and sounds of others within the area, the unit does not offer an outstanding opportunity for solitude. The same lack of topographic and vegetative diversity limits the opportunities for primitive recreation within the area.

4. Supplemental Values:

The area provides critical winter habitat for antelope and a prairie falcon nest is located in the unit.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

The White Hills South inventory unit is not recommended for wilderness study. Although portions of the unit remain apparently natural, the cumulative effect of man's impacts are apparent. Opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation are not outstanding due to lack of topographic and vegetative screening and limiting size.

Philip R Cressman — AUGUST 23, 1979

James R. Foote — 08-29-79

Staff Signatures — Dates

Approval

District Manager — 8/31/79 Date

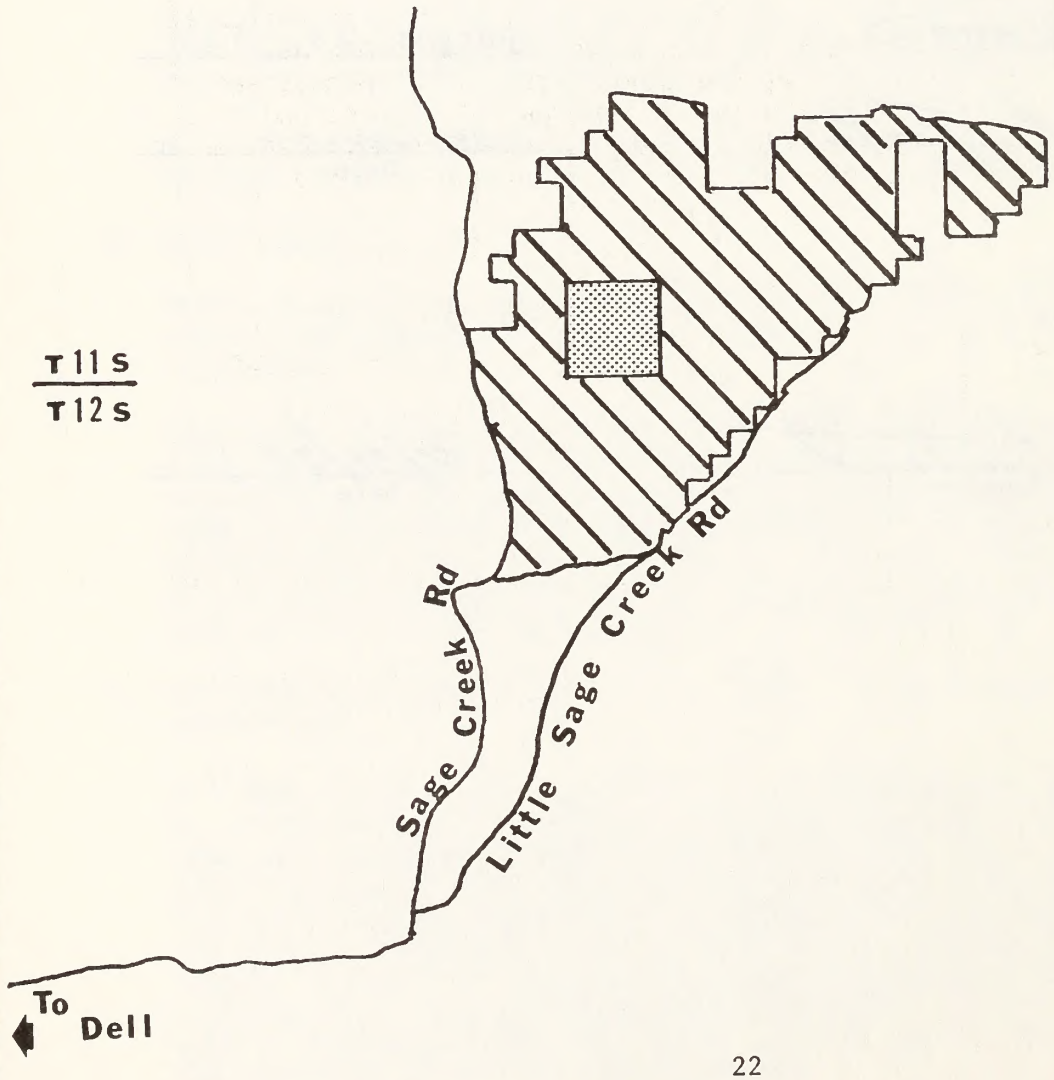
WHITE HILLS SOUTH

MT-076-006

LEGEND

Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).



R 8 W | R 7 W

Scale 1/2 inch : 1 mile

IN REPLY REFER TO
8500

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
District Office
Box 308
Butte, Montana 59701

August 31, 1979

Memorandum

To: State Director, Montana

From: District Manager, Butte

Subject: Step 4, Intensive Inventory, Wilderness Review

Unit 007, East Fork Blacktail Deer Creek, is recommended as a proposed Wilderness Study Area (WSA). I would like to call to your attention the fact that the unit is adjacent to an extensive area of Forest Service roadless land. This roadless and undeveloped area, 1-025 Beaverhead N.F. was identified in the first stage of the RARE II process and later dropped. Some determination should be made during the study phase as to whether and how much Forest Service land should also be studied.

Enclosure

CONSERVE AMERICA'S ENERGY

Save Energy and You Serve America!

Wilderness Characteristics Narrative Summary

Unit number: MT-076-007
Unit name: East Fork Blacktail Deer Creek

1. Physical description:

The East Fork Blacktail Deer Creek Inventory Unit is located approximately 33 miles southeast of Dillon, Montana. Public access is via improved and primitive roads along Blacktail Deer Creek and East Fork Blacktail Deer Creek.

Except for one section of state land contiguous with the southeastern corner, the unit is bounded on the south and east by Forest Service administered land. The Montana Department of Fish and Game administered Blacktail Elk Winter Range and private land comprise the western and northern boundaries respectively. About one mile of the East Fork Blacktail Deer Creek Road has been excluded from the unit by the creation of a road corridor.

The inventory unit boundary encompasses 6,180 acres, all of which are in public ownership.

2. Naturalness:

The East Fork Blacktail Deer Creek is dominated by three relatively large drainages, those of the East Fork, Robb, and Crow's Nest Creeks above which towers the 10,581-foot summit of Sunset Peak. It is an area of open sagebrush foothills, grass parks, aspen and willow groves, alpine meadows, talus slopes, and Douglas-fir and limber pine forests on the west slope of the Snowcrest Range. It appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

Imprints of man's work within the unit are limited to vehicle ways and fences, but neither their individual nor cumulative impact is great enough to significantly affect the area's apparent naturalness.

3. Outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation:

The East Fork Blacktail Deer Creek provides outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Vegetative screening and topographic diversity is excellent throughout the area, creating conditions conducive for visitors to avoid the sights, sounds, and evidence of others in the inventory unit.

While the natural character of the landscape helps to create outstanding opportunities for solitude, it offers the potential for superb hiking and backpacking experiences. Other

recreational opportunities include fishing, hunting, horseback riding, photography, and nature study. In short, the area possesses both a diversity in number of activities possible and the outstanding quality of several opportunities.

4. Supplemental values:

The East Fork Blacktail Deer Creek contains a number of supplemental values in its wide diversity of plant and animal life, geologic history, and scenic quality.

5. Recommendation and rationale:

This unit is recommended for classification as a Wilderness Study Area. It is of sufficient size, appears primarily natural, possesses outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation, and has supplemental values.

James R Foote — 08-22-79

Stephen P. Bates — 08-31-79

Staff signatures — *Date*

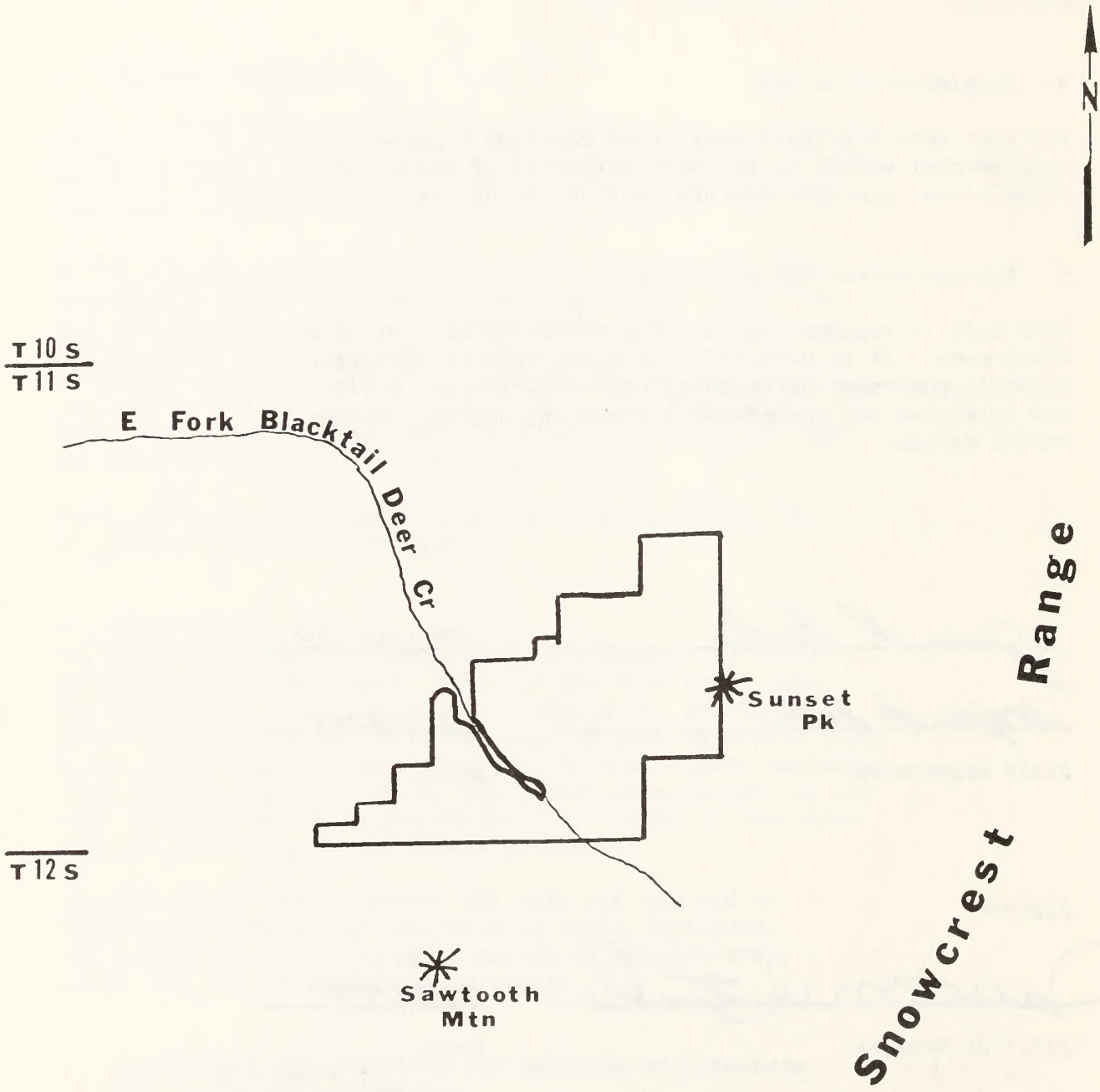
Approval

[signature] — 8/31/79

District Manager — *Date*

EAST FORK BLACKTAIL DEER CREEK

MT-076-007



Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).

R 6 W | R 5 W

R 4 W

Scale 1/2 inch : 1 mile

Wilderness Characteristics

Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-008

Unit Name Basin Creek North

1. Physical Description:

Basin Creek North is located 30 air miles south of Dillon, Montana. Access to the area is obtained by exiting I-15 at Dell and traveling the Sage Creek and Basin Creek roads east for approximately 10 miles.

Two boundary revisions relating to vehicle ways were made, decreasing the original area from 20,580 acres to 18,975 acres. The revised unit boundary encloses 17,960 acres of public land, 790 acres of state land, and 80 acres of private land.

This area has an irregular configuration. A five-mile long "tail," one-half to one mile wide, extends east then south from the northeastern corner of the area. The south, west, and north boundaries are formed by roads and private land, and the east boundary is formed by state land.

2. Naturalness:

There are two major land forms in the area consisting of broad basins, and a series of alternating long ridges and narrow valleys. Elevations range from 6,492 feet near Basin Creek to 8,160 feet at Vinegar Hill.

Approximately 97% of the area is dominated by grassland and sagebrush communities. Small pockets of Douglas fir and limber pine are scattered along the eastern boundary and throughout the "tail."

The imprint of man's work is evident throughout the unit. There are 28 miles of vehicle ways, 20 miles of fence, and three and one-half miles of buried pipeline. These impacts are particularly noticeable on ridges and slopes. Other human impacts include a partially revegetated ditch, an old cabin, and livestock grazing. Because of the cumulative effect of these impacts on apparent naturalness the unit does not appear primarily affected by the forces of nature.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The open nature of the basins combined with their relatively small size limits their opportunities for solitude. The series of ridges and valleys does provide some topographical screening; however, it would be difficult to avoid the sights and sounds of others in the area.

Opportunities for primitive recreation exist within the area, but they are limited to hiking and hunting. Neither of these opportunities could be considered as outstanding.

4. Supplemental Values:

This area provides winter range for antelope, mule deer, and elk.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

This unit does not appear primarily affected by the forces of nature. The high density of fences, vehicle ways, and other developments makes the imprint of man's work substantially noticeable. There are no outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation. The unit is not recommended for further wilderness consideration.

John K Mercer — August 27, 1979

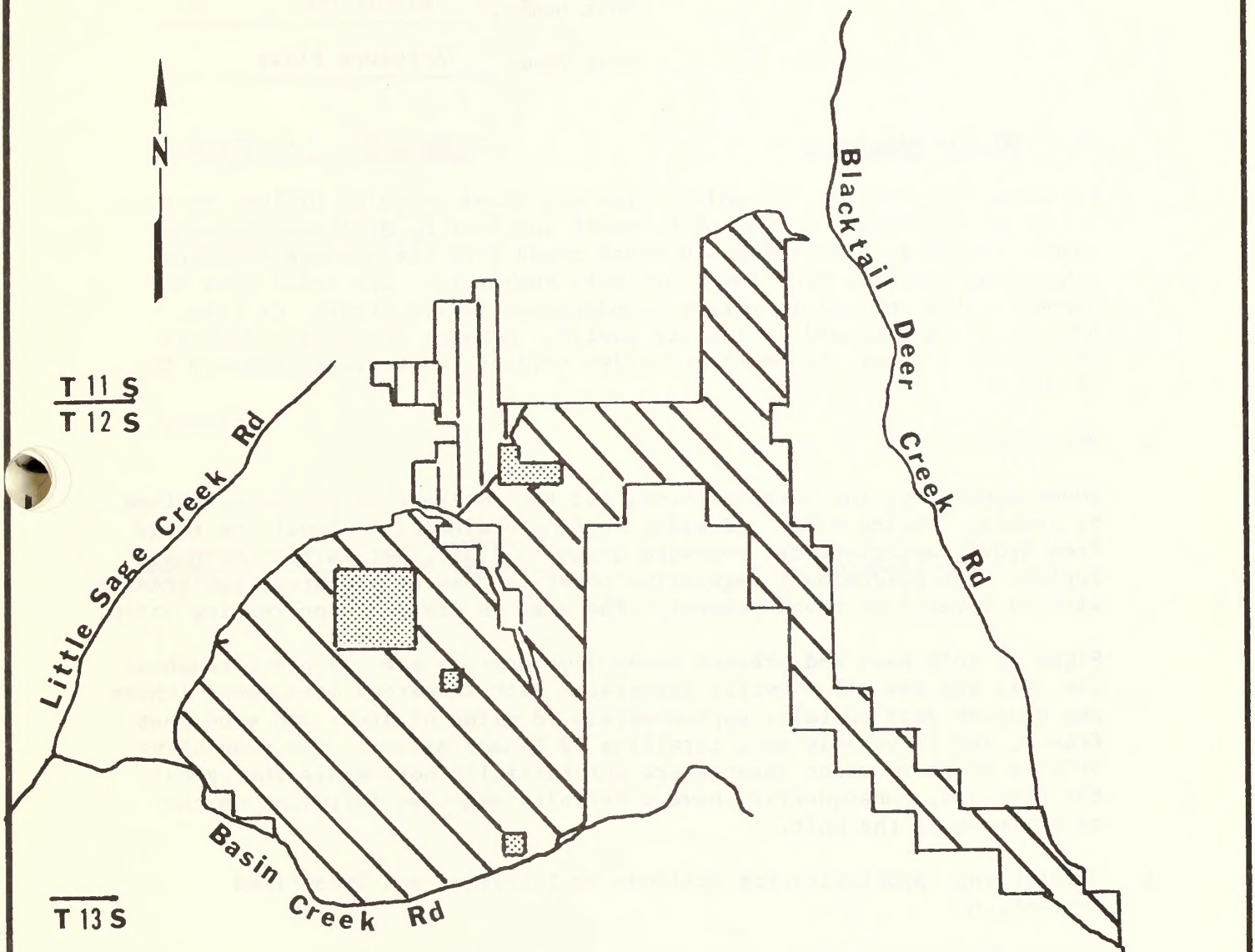
John Quinine — August 27, 1979

Staff Signatures — Dates

Approval

District Manager — 8/31/79 — Date

BASIN CREEK NORTH
MT-076-008



LEGEND

Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

Area deleted from original inventory unit due to road relocation.

Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).

R 8 W

R 7 W | R 6 W

SCALE ½ inch: 1 mile

Wilderness Characteristics

Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-009

Unit Name Antelope Flats

1. Physical Description:

Antelope Flats is located thirty-five air miles south of Dillon, Montana. The unit is bounded on the north, south and west by State and private lands. Antelope Flat and Basin Creek roads form the eastern boundary, separating the area from Inventory Unit Number 10. The total area enclosed by the initial inventory boundary was 14,770 acres. Of this, 640 are State land and 14,130 are public. A minor boundary reduction of 110 acres along the southern border revises the acreage downward to 14,020.

2. Naturalness:

Topographically, the terrain throughout the entire unit is characterized by gentle, rolling hills and wide, shallow drainages. Elevations range from 6,000 feet along the westward draws to 7,217 feet in the northeast region. The predominant vegetative cover is that of sagebrush and grasses with no forests or trees present. The area is dry, with no running water.

Signs of both past and present human developments are visible throughout the unit and are all directly associated with livestock management (three one quarter acre corrals, approximately 18 miles of steel and wood post fences, and 21 vehicle ways totalling 32 linear miles). The cumulative effects of these minor impacts are substantially noticeable throughout the area and, consequently, have a definite negative influence on the naturalness of the unit.

3. Outstanding Opportunity for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are not available in Antelope Flats due to the almost total lack of vegetative and topographic screening. The unit does possess some primitive recreation opportunities such as horseback riding and hunting, but does not have any single outstanding opportunity or enough diversity of opportunities to be considered outstanding.

4. Supplemental Values:

No supplemental values were discernible.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

The area is not recommended for wilderness study due to the significant impacts on apparent naturalness and the lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation.

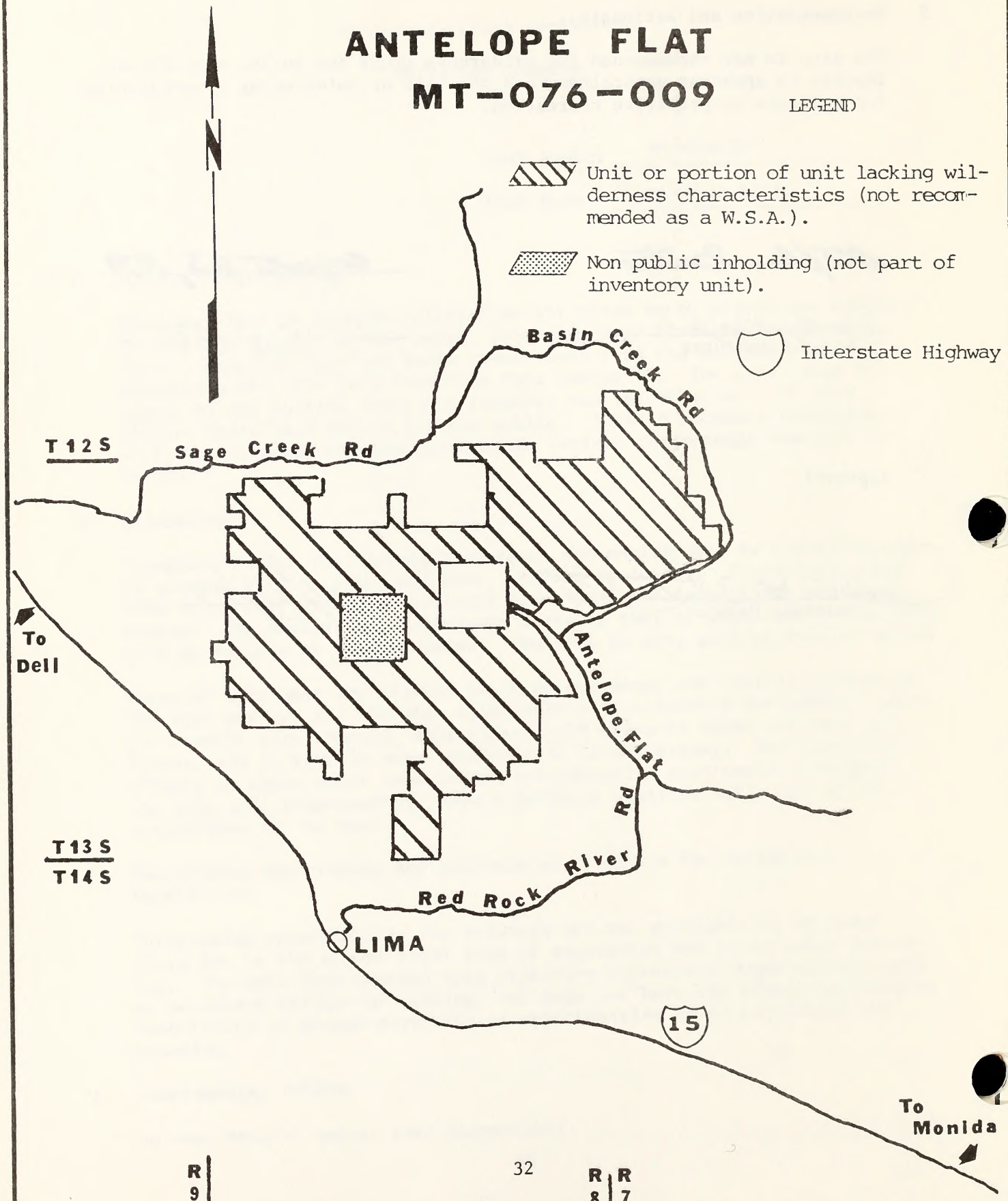
Stephen Dates — August 23, 1979

Staff Signatures — Dates

Approval

District Manager — 8/31/79 Date

ANTELOPE FLAT
MT-076-009



Wilderness Characteristics

Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-010

Unit Name Basin Creek South

1. Physical Description:

Basin Creek South is located 40 air miles south of Dillon, Montana. Access to the area is available by leaving I-15 at the Lima Exit and traveling east for eight miles on the Red Rock River road.

Two boundary adjustments during the intensive inventory increased the total roadless area from 8,595 acres to 11,695 acres. Of the total, 10,815 acres are public land, and 880 acres are State land.

The north and south sides of the area are bounded by private and State lands. The western edge of the area is formed by a road. The eastern portion of the area is a three and one-half mile long finger of land, one-half to one-quarter mile wide, bounded by State and private land.

2. Naturalness:

The central core of the unit is a long ridge which separates Basin Creek from the Red Rock River. Elevations range from 6,649 feet near Basin Creek to 8,739 feet at Clover Divide near the eastern portion of the area.

Approximately 95 percent of the area is vegetated by grassland species. There are several small patches of Douglas-fir and limber pine clustered in the west central portion of the area.

Human impacts in the area include: a mineral prospect site, revegetated bulldozed firelines, a log building, an old ditch or pipeline berm, significant grazing impacts in the wet drainages, approximately 14 miles of fence, and 22 miles of vehicle ways.

With the exception of fences and vehicle ways, each impact affects only a portion of the unit. However, the spatial distribution of the impacts is such that man's work is evident in most of the area. This characteristic, combined with the frequency and high visibility of vehicle ways and fences, makes the imprint of man's work substantially noticeable throughout the major portion of the area.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The physiographic configuration of the high grassy ridge sloping into broad, flat prairie basins limits opportunities for solitude. Users on the prairie and open slopes would have little opportunity to avoid the sights and sounds of other parties within the area.

Opportunities for primitive recreation are limited. Hiking, hunting, and cross-country skiing are adversely affected by the fences, vehicle ways, and the uniform nature of topography and vegetation.

4. Supplemental Values:

An archaeological site comprised of a small group of teepee rings is present in the northern portion of the area.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

The unit does not appear primarily affected by the forces of nature; man's imprint is substantially noticeable. The limited opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are not outstanding. The unit is not recommended for further wilderness study.

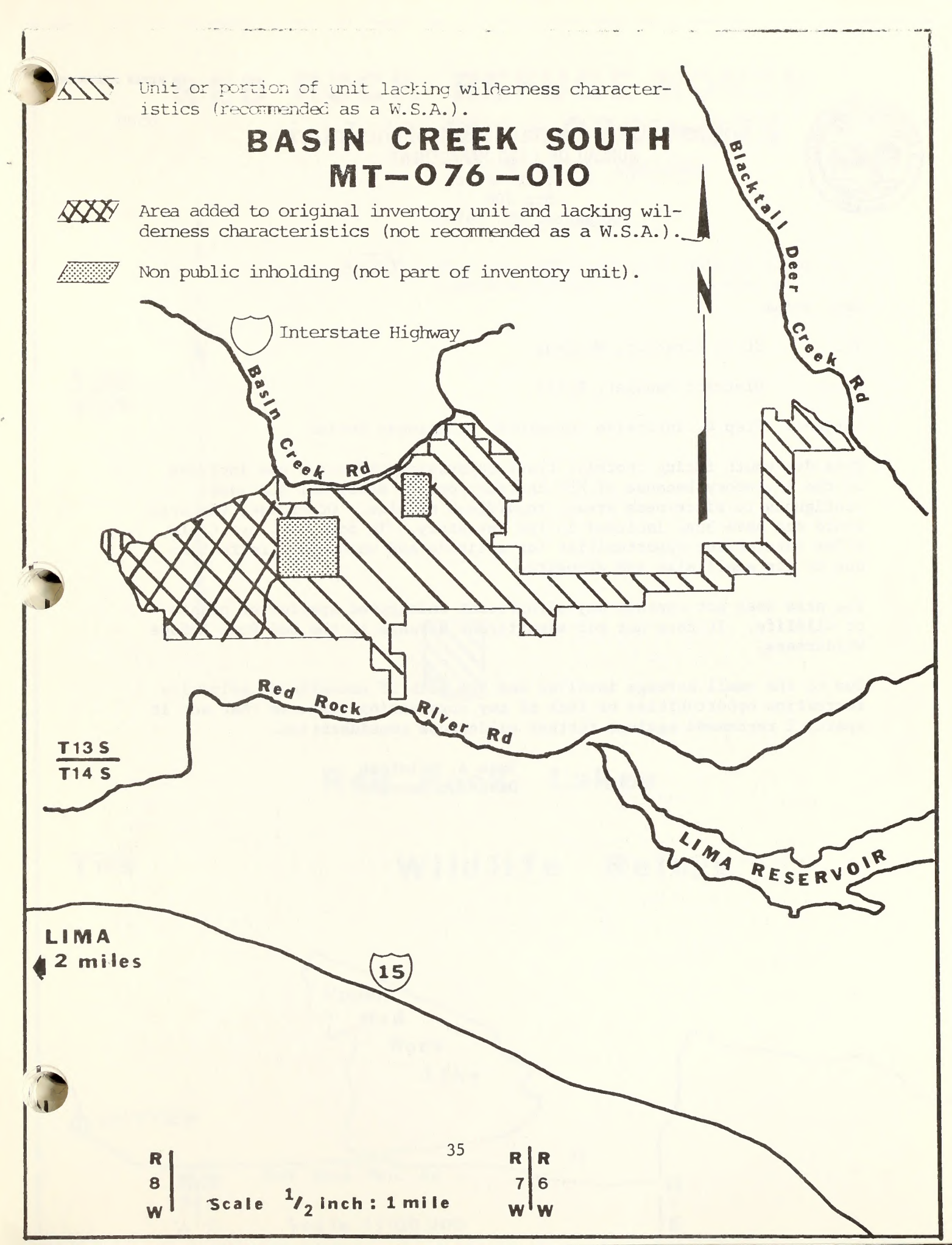
John K Mercer — august 24, 1979

John Quinn — August 29, 1979

Staff Signatures — Dates

Approval

District Manager — 8/31/79 Date


Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).
BASIN CREEK SOUTH
MT-076-010
Area added to original inventory unit and lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
Interstate Highway
Basin Creek Rd
Blacktail Deer Creek Rd
N
Red Rock River Rd
T13S
T14S
LIMA RESERVOIR
LIMA
2 miles
15
R 8 W
Scale 1/2 inch : 1 mile
R 7 R 6 W W

IN REPLY REFER TO

8500

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
District Office
Box 308
Butte, MT 59701

Memorandum

To: State Director, Montana

From: District Manager, Butte

Subject: Step 4, Intensive Inventory, Wilderness Review

This dry south facing foothill tract comprising 440 acres was included in the inventory because of MSO instructions to study all BLM lands contiguous to wilderness areas, regardless of size. Otherwise, the area would not have been included in the inventory. It does not, by itself, offer outstanding opportunities for solitude and unconfined recreation due to its small size and exposure.

The area does not contain any significant endangered species of plants or wildlife. It does not add significant acreage to the Red Rock Refuge Wilderness.

Due to the small acreage involved and the lack of unconfined, primitive recreation opportunities or lack of any outstanding features that set it apart, I recommend against further wilderness consideration.

Jack A. McIntosh
District Manager

RED ROCK REFUGE NORTH
MT-076-015
REVISED DECISION

LEGEND

Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

T 12S
T 13S

N

Red Rock Lakes

T 14S

Wildlife Refuge

Upper Red Rock Lake

LAKEVIEW

Red Rock Pass Rd

R 2 W | R 1 W

R 1 E

Scale 1:100,000

Wilderness Characteristics

Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-015

Unit Name Red Rock Refuge North

1. Physical Description:

The Red Rock Refuge North inventory unit is located four miles north of upper Red Rocks Lake in the Centennial Valley. The northern and eastern boundaries of the unit are contiguous with lands managed by the State of Montana. One half-mile of the southern boundary is contiguous with classified wilderness managed by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. The remainder of the southern and the western boundaries are formed by the border between public and nonpublic land.

The inventory unit contains 440 acres of public lands. Although this unit is less than 5,000 acres, the size criteria for wilderness study is satisfied by the unit's contiguity with a formally established wilderness area.

The contiguous wilderness is a segment of dry, grass and sagebrush country approximately 2,800 acres in size, separated from the main portion of refuge wilderness by a road running up the north side of the Centennial Valley.

2. Naturalness:

The inventory unit is on a dry, south facing slope rising up off the Centennial Valley floor. Elevation gain is from 6,750 feet along the southern boundary to 7,020 feet in the northeast corner. Hogback ridges covered mostly with bunch grass dominate the unit, with some slopes supporting stands of six to ten feet tall Great Basin Sage.

Although one faint vehicle way is presently running along the eastern border, the area appears to be primarily natural and the imprints of man are substantially unnoticeable.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Although the hogback ridge configuration of most of the unit offers some opportunities for solitude, outstanding opportunities are not present.

Opportunities for primitive recreation within the unit are limited due to the area's small size and lack of diversity.

4. Supplemental Values:

The unit contains a relic stand of seven to ten foot tall Great Basin Sage. These plants are of significant botanical interest.

5. Recommendations and Rational:

This inventory unit does not display outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. However, the unit is primarily natural, with man's imprints substantially unnoticeable. Being contiguous with classified wilderness of the same character, wilderness study is recommended.

Philip L Crissman — AUGUST 23, 1979

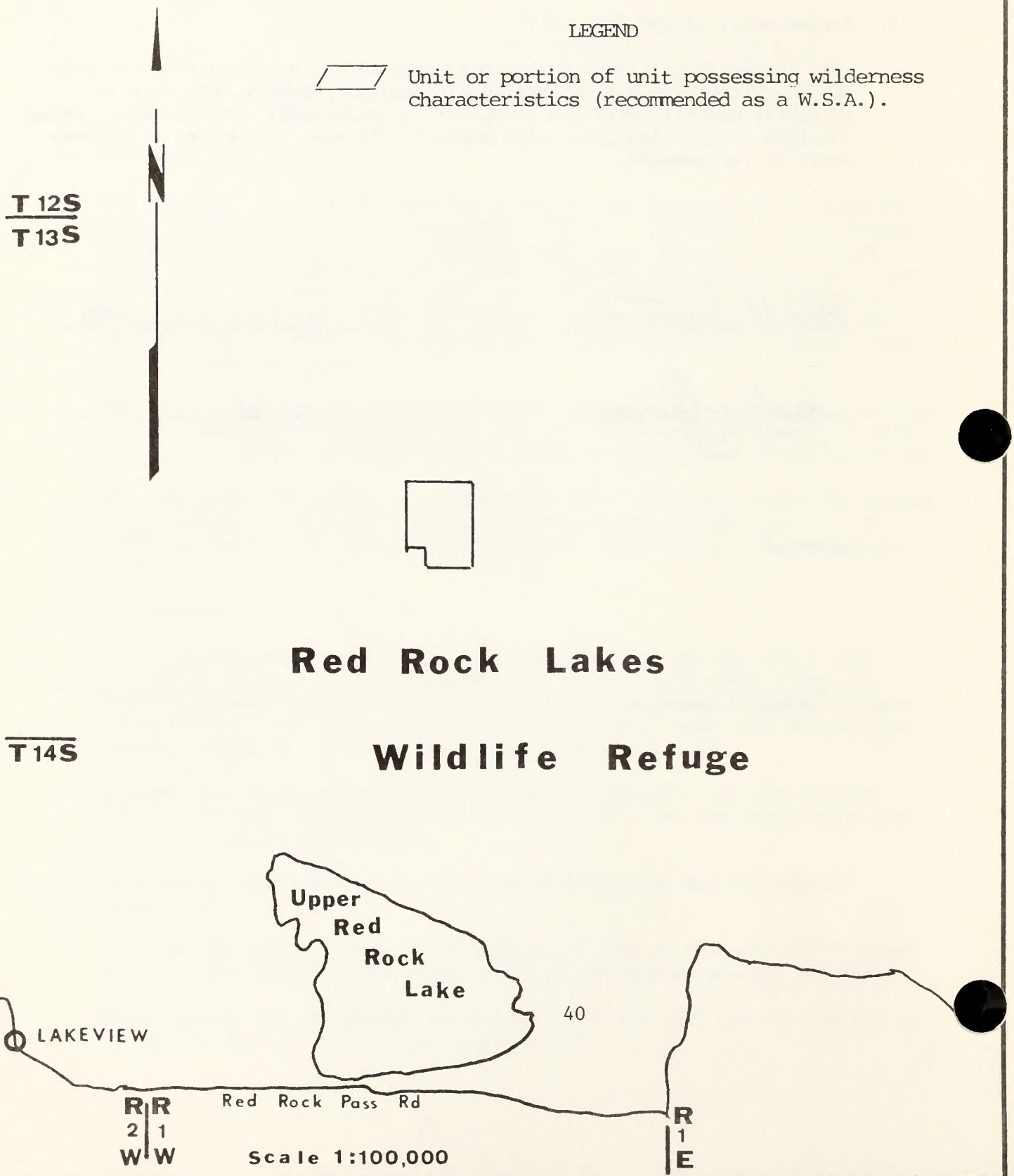
Andrea Sharon — 08/28/79

Staff Signatures — Dates

Approval

District Manager — Date

RED ROCK REFUGE NORTH
MT-076-015



Wilderness Characteristics
Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-011

Unit Name Lima Reservoir

1. Physical Description:

The Lima Reservoir Inventory Unit is located on the valley floor at the extreme western end of the Centennial Valley. It's north boundary is formed by the shore of Lima Reservoir; to the east, west, and half of the south, the boundary is formed by private land. The rest is bounded by county road.

The total acreage enclosed by the unit boundary is 5,680 acres. Of this, 320 acres are private land and the remaining 5,360 acres are public land.

2. Naturalness:

Imprints of man are present in this unit and because of the area's flatness, they are substantially noticeable. There are approximately nine and a half miles of fencing associated with the unit and at least some portion of this fencing is visible from virtually any location within the boundary.

There are seven and a half miles of low impact vehicle ways within the unit.

Offsite impacts are significant in the unit. A county road comprises nearly one-half of the southern boundary. Vehicles travelling this route impact the area's naturalness in terms of both sight and sounds. In addition, the presence of machinery or any incompatible activities on the private land within the boundary would be directly visible.

3. Outstanding Opportunity for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Both the opportunities for solitude and for primitive recreation are less than outstanding in this unit. There are no means by which to avoid the sights, sounds or evidence of other people. From almost any point in this small, flat unit one could observe any other person in the area. The unit is immediately surrounded by, and unscreened from, private lands where roads, range improvements and, when present, vehicles and people, are easily visible. The nature of this land offers little opportunity for recreation other than birdwatching.

4. Supplemental Values:

This area supports an outstanding wildlife habitat. The entire area along the reservoir is utilized by swans, geese, ducks, Great Blue herons, curlews, Sandhill cranes, pelicans, hawks, sage grouse and antelope. This area is a critical moulting habitat for geese.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

Wilderness study is not recommended for this area. The effects of man are present and substantially noticeable. The unit presents little opportunity for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

Philip L Cushman — AUGUST 22, 1979

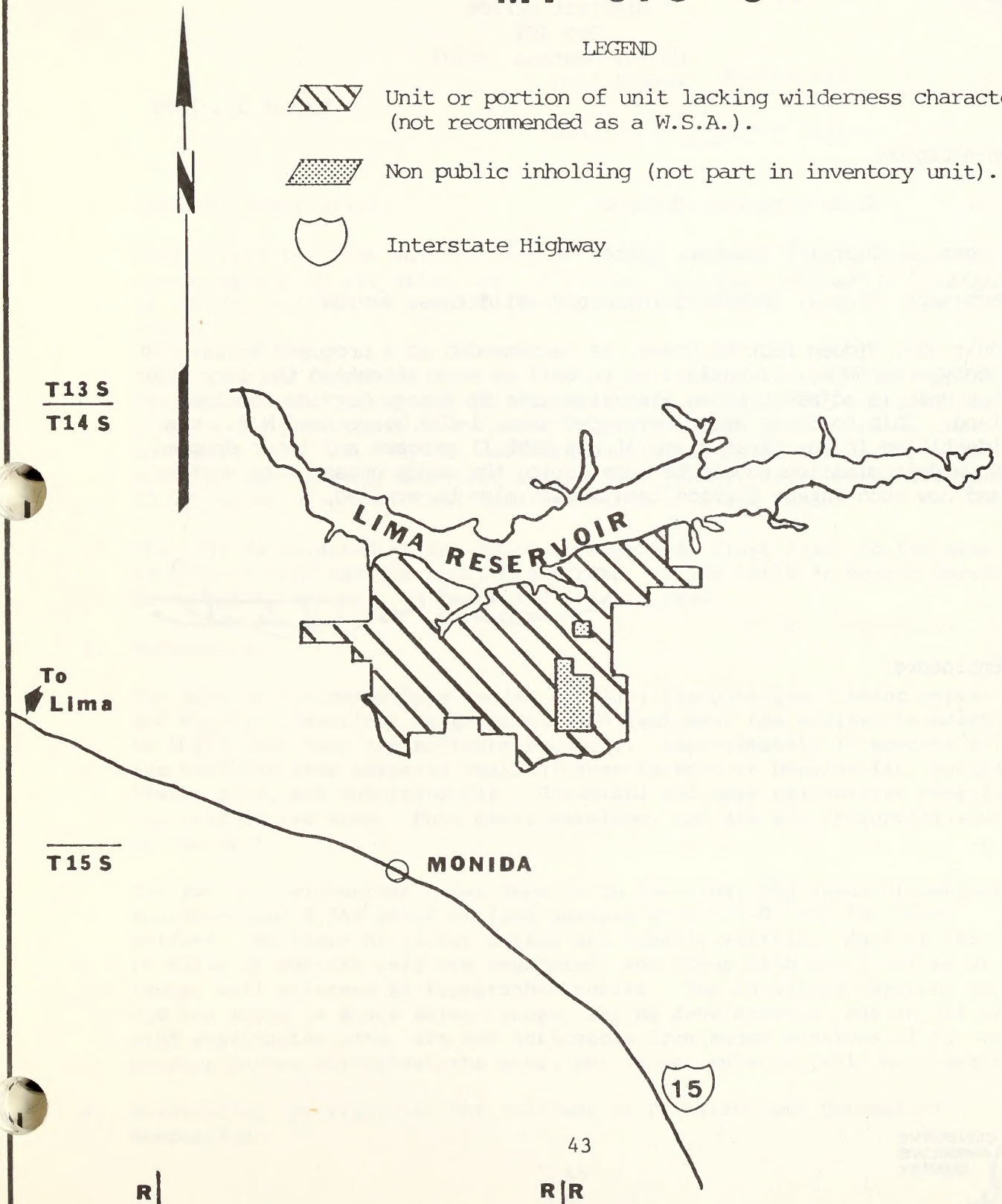
James R. Foster — 08-29-79

Staff Signatures — Date

Approval:

District Manager — 8/31/79 Date

LIMA RESERVOIR
MT-076-011



IN REPLY REFER
8500

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
District Office
Box 308
Butte, Montana 59701

August 31, 1979

Memorandum

To: State Director, Montana

From: District Manager, Butte

Subject: Step 4, Intensive Inventory, Wilderness Review

Unit 022, Hidden Pasture Creek, is recommended as a proposed Wilderness Study Area (WSA). I would like to call to your attention the fact that the unit is adjacent to an extensive area of Forest Service roadless land. This roadless and undeveloped area, 1-019 Beaverhead N.F., was identified in the first stage of the RARE II process and later dropped. Some determination should be made during the study phase as to whether and how much Forest Service land should also be studied.

Enclosure

CONSERVE AMERICA'S ENERGY

Save Energy and You Serve America!

Wilderness Characteristics

Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-022

Unit Name Hidden Pasture Creek

1. Physical Description:

Hidden Pasture Creek unit is located in the southern Tendoy Mountains, approximately 40 air miles west of Dillon, Montana. Access is obtained by exiting I-15 at Dell and following Big Sheep Creek road for six miles.

The intensive inventory determined that the vehicle way separating units 023, East Muddy Creek, and 022, Hidden Pasture Creek, did not meet the minimum qualifications of a "road." The two areas were combined into Inventory Unit 022. On the southern boundary a power corridor was excluded, removing approximately four acres. The revised boundary encloses 15,475 acres of public land, and 640 acres of State land.

The unit is bordered to the south by Big Sheep Creek Road, to the west by private land and the Muddy Creek road, to the north by Forest Service land, and to the east by roads and private land.

2. Naturalness:

The unit is dominated by a series of high, steep ridges running north and south. Elevations range from 5,900 feet near the eastern boundary to 8,825 feet near the northern boundary. Approximately 15 percent of the roadless area supports small diverse forests of Douglas-fir, spruce, limber pine, and subalpine fir. Grassland and sage communities comprise the rest of the area. Mule deer, antelope, and elk are frequently seen in the unit.

The two most widespread human impacts in the area, 722 acres of contour furrowing and 9,840 acres of land sprayed with 2-4-D, are the least evident. No signs of either action are readily visible. Most of the 16 miles of vehicle ways are vegetated, and along with the 17 miles of fence, well screened by topographic relief. The localized impacts, an old log cabin, a stock water trough, spring developments, and an old mineral exploration site, are not noticeable from major portions of the area. Grazing occurs throughout the area, but is not substantially noticeable.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

In the portions of the area steep hills and deep valleys combine with many side canyons and small timbered drainages to offer excellent opportunities to avoid unwanted contracts with other humans in the area. Hidden Pasture Creek trail provides an exceptional sense of aloneness and isolation from the works of man. The diversity of topography and vegetation found in portions of this unit afford outstanding opportunities for solitude.

Numerous and diverse opportunities for primitive recreation are available in this unit, including hiking, bird watching, hunting, horseback riding, nature study and photography. Portions of the area offer opportunities for technical rock climbing. The topography is ideal for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. However, none of these opportunities could be considered outstanding.

4. Supplemental Values:

This area was proposed as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern to protect fisheries resources, big horn sheep habitat, possible wolf habitat, and riparian zones. The reintroduction of big horn sheep is currently being planned. An endangered species, the gray wolf, has been sighted several times in the area. The Muddy Creek Basin is proposed as in Area of Critical Environmental Concern for protection of archaeological resources. This ACEC study is scheduled to be done in FY 80. Several lithic sites are located in the area.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

This area is primarily natural, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. It provides outstanding opprotunities for solitude, and does have a diverse range of opportunities for primitive recreation, though they are not outstanding. The unit has unique supplemental values of scientific, educational, and historic interest. This unit is recommended for further study.

John K Mercer — 8-28-79

Stephen P Gates — 08-31-79

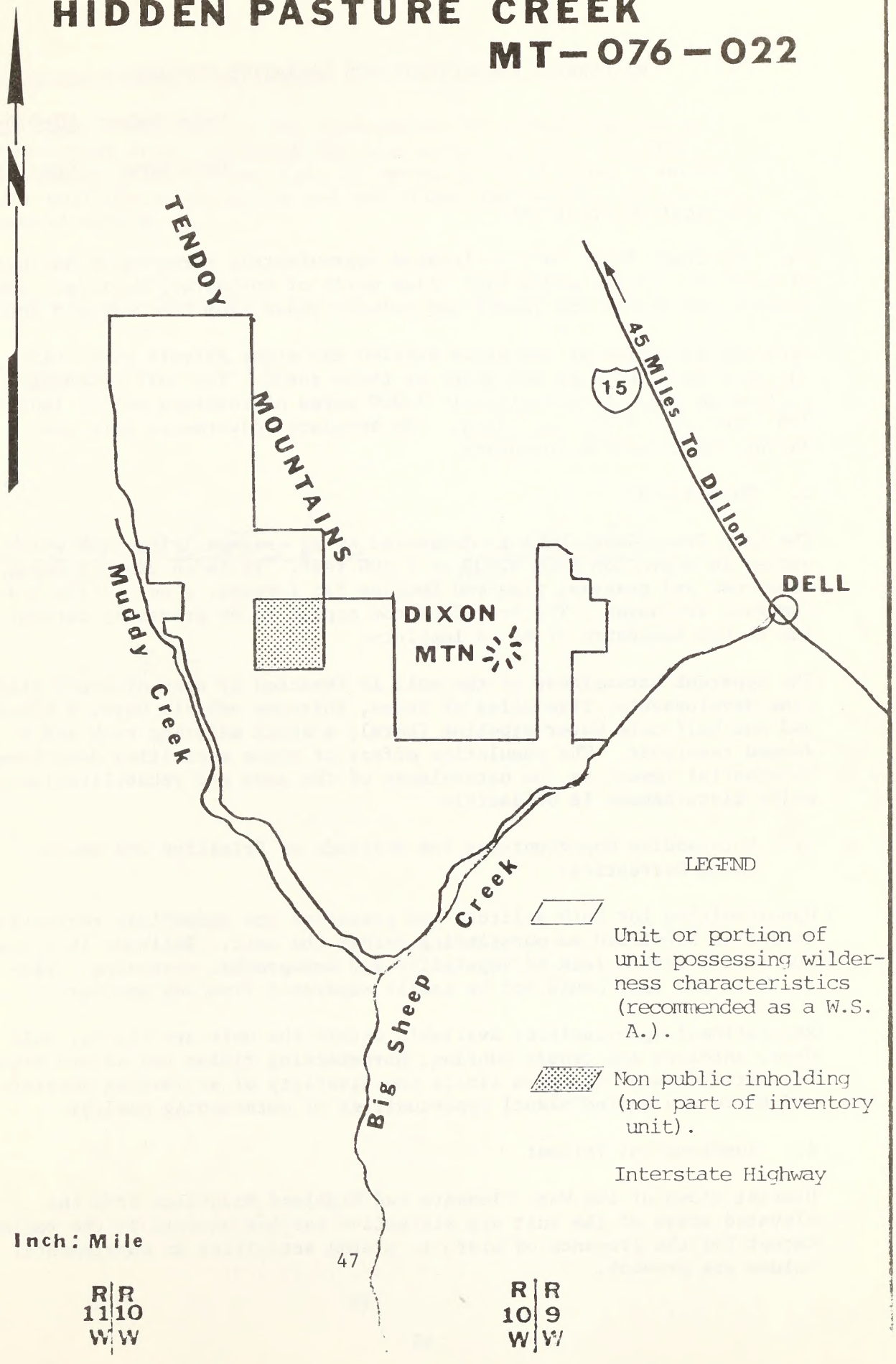
Staff Signatures — Date

Approval

[signature] — 9/31/79

District Manager — Date

HIDDEN PASTURE CREEK
MT-076-022



WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-024

Unit Name Camp Creek South

1. Physical Description:

The Camp Creek South Unit is located approximately three miles northeast of Melrose, and two and a half miles north of Rochester, Montana. The area is accessible via county and private roads from the west and south.

With the exception of one state section and eight private ownerships, the unit is bounded on all sides by three roads. The unit boundaries enclose an area of approximately 7,200 acres of roadless public land and 220 acres of private inholdings. No boundary adjustments were made during the intensive inventory.

2. Naturalness:

The Camp Creek South Unit is dominated by an eastwest ridgeline which varies in elevation from 6,000 to 7,500 feet. It is an area of open, sagebrush and grasses, pine and Douglas fir forests, sheer cliffs and numerous drainages. The area does not appear to be primarily natural due to the abundance of man's imprints.

The apparent naturalness of the unit is impacted by open prospect pits, mine developments, five miles of fence, thirteen vehicle ways, a three and one half mile water pipeline (berm), a stock watering tank and a dammed reservoir. The cumulative effect of these activities does have a substantial impact on the naturalness of the area and rehabilitation of major disturbances is unfeasible.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation cannot be construed as outstanding within the unit. Solitude is limited due to the area's lack of vegetative and topographic screening. Visitors in the unit could not be easily separated from one another.

Recreational opportunities available within the unit are hiking, mule deer, antelope and grouse hunting, horsebacking riding and nature study. The attributes of the area limits the diversity of activities possible and there are no individual opportunities of outstanding quality.

4. Supplemental Values:

Distant views of the West Pioneers and Highland Mountains from the elevated areas of the unit are attractive but not unusual to the region. Except for the presence of historic mining activities no supplemental values are present.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

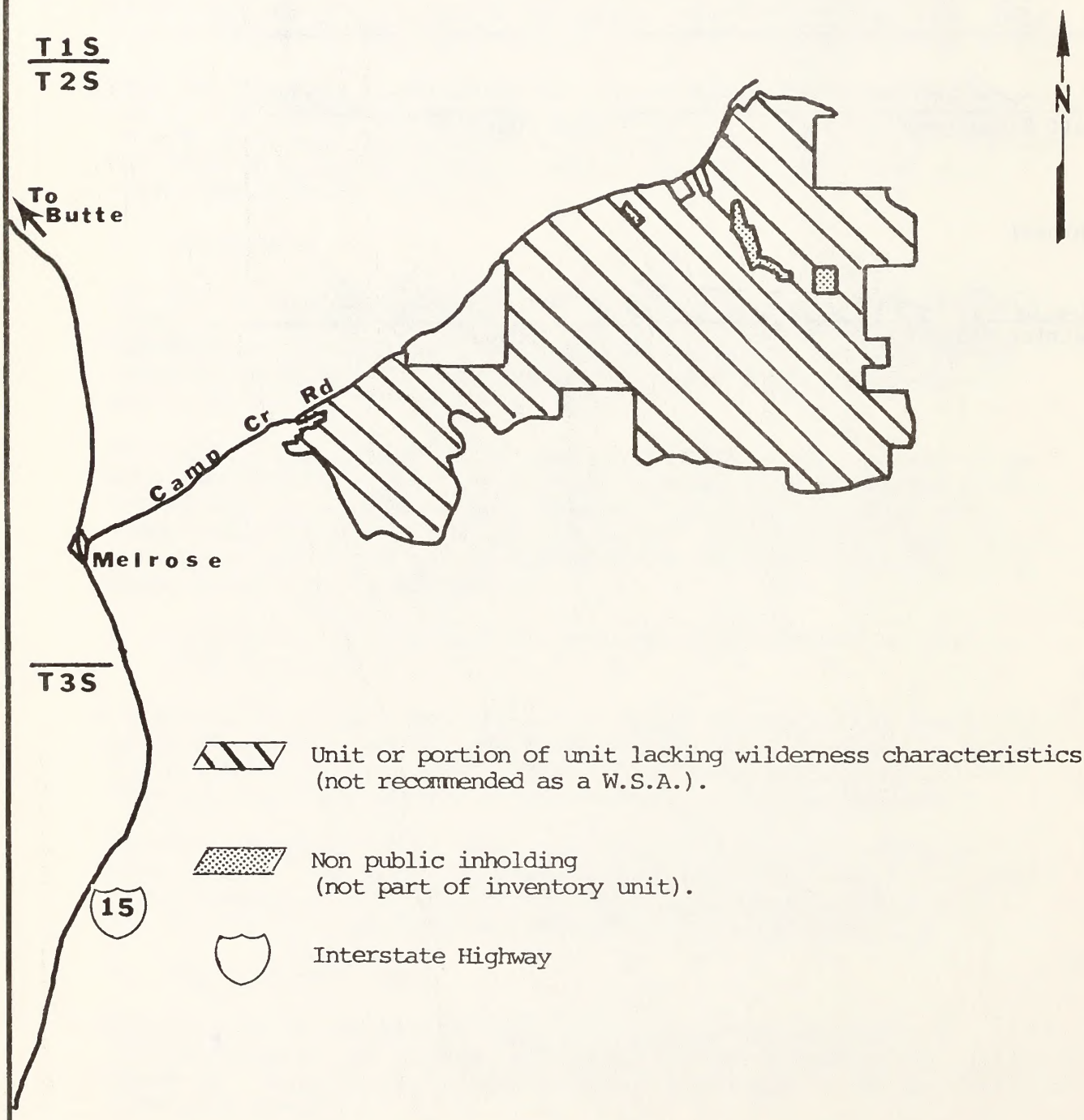
The Camp Creek South Unit is not recommended for classification as a Wilderness Study Area. Although the area meets the size criteria, it does not appear primarily natural, possesses no outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, and has no supplemental values.

Staff Signatures — Date

Approval

District Manager — Date 8/31/79

CAMP CREEK SOUTH
MT-076-024



WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-025

Unit Name McCartney Mtn./ Sandy Hollow

1. Physical Description:

After completing the initial inventory for each of these areas, it was determined that the boundary roads which separated the two units are not in fact roads according to the legislative definition in the Wilderness Inventory Handbook. Therefore, these two units have been joined to form one unit. This new unit is located 17 miles north of Dillon, Montana. It is accessible by county roads and with owner's permission, by private dirt roads from I-15 and State Highway 41.

The northern and eastern boundaries are formed by private and state land. The western and southern boundaries are formed by private land and Burma road. These boundaries enclose some 16,380 acres of public land, 640 acres of state land, and approximately 560 acres of private land.

2. Naturalness:

The McCartney Mountain/Sandy Hollow Unit comprises steep, timbered slopes, open meadows, many drainages, and some unique geological formations. Elevation ranges from 8,364 feet on McCartney Mountain to 4,850 feet near the southern boundary.

A number of impacts are located in this unit. Mining activity, vehicle ways, grazing, fences, spring developments, junk automobiles, refuse sites, several abandoned cabins, a 200 foot long water diversion ditch and a ¼ mile long transmission line account for all of the impacts found. Given the area's relatively large size--16,380 acres--these impacts do not signficantly detract from the overall apparent naturalness of the unit. Some of the more severe impacts, such as mining, are distributed and located in such a way that they are not easily seen from within most of the unit. It can be said that this area appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The many gulches in the southeastern portion of the unit combined with the densely forested slopes and deep drainages in the northern portion provide excellent opportunities for solitude.

Backpacking, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, sightseeing of geological features, nature study and photography are all excellent primitive recreational opportunities found in the McCartney Mountain/Sandy Hollow area. Depending on snow conditions, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing could also be outstanding.

4. Supplemental Values:

This area contains year-round habitat for elk and is used by deer during the summer, fall, and winter. In the northcentral part of the unit is located a crucial elk calving ground. The southeastern portion of the area is used for nesting by raptors.

In the southeast corner of the unit is the evidence of Indian cultures in the form of drive alignment cairns and rock walls associated with a pishkun or buffalo jump near the Big Hole River. Upthrusted rock ridges, also in the southeastern portion of the area, are unique geological features.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

It is recommended that the McCartney Mountain/Sandy Hollow area receive further wilderness study. It meets all the criteria found in Section 2C of the 1964 Wilderness Act. It is of sufficient size; it appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature; it has outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation; and it has supplemental values.

John Amance — August 29, 1979

Andrea Sharon — 08/28/79

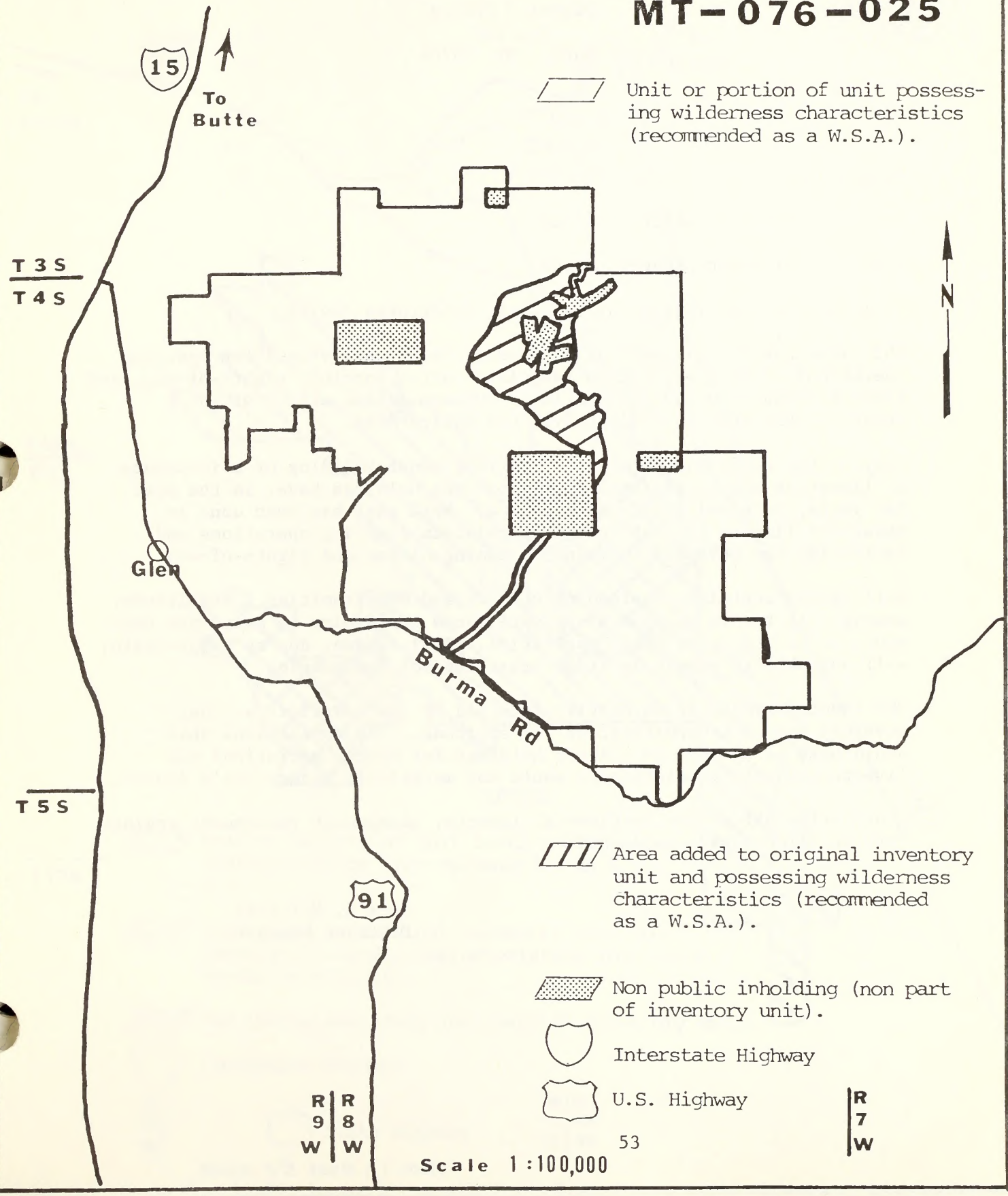
Staff Signatures — Date

Approval

District Manager — 8/31/79 — Date

McCARTNEY MOUNTAIN/SANDY HOLLOW

MT-076-025



IN REPLY REFER

8500

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
District Office
Box 308
Butte, MT 59701

Memorandum

To: State Director, Montana

From: District Manager, Butte

Subject: Step 4, Intensive Inventory, Wilderness Review

This area has in the past to the present been heavily used for ranching operations, timber production associated with ranching, rights-of-way, and mineral production and prospecting. The cumulative effect of man's impact on the area is evident over the entire area.

Many of the roads built for wood hauling, fence building or maintenance of livestock and access to interior private holdings have, in the past few years, received little maintenance. Work that has been done is generally limited to that needed to maintain ranching operations and facilities for ORVs and to maintain mining claims and rights-of-way.

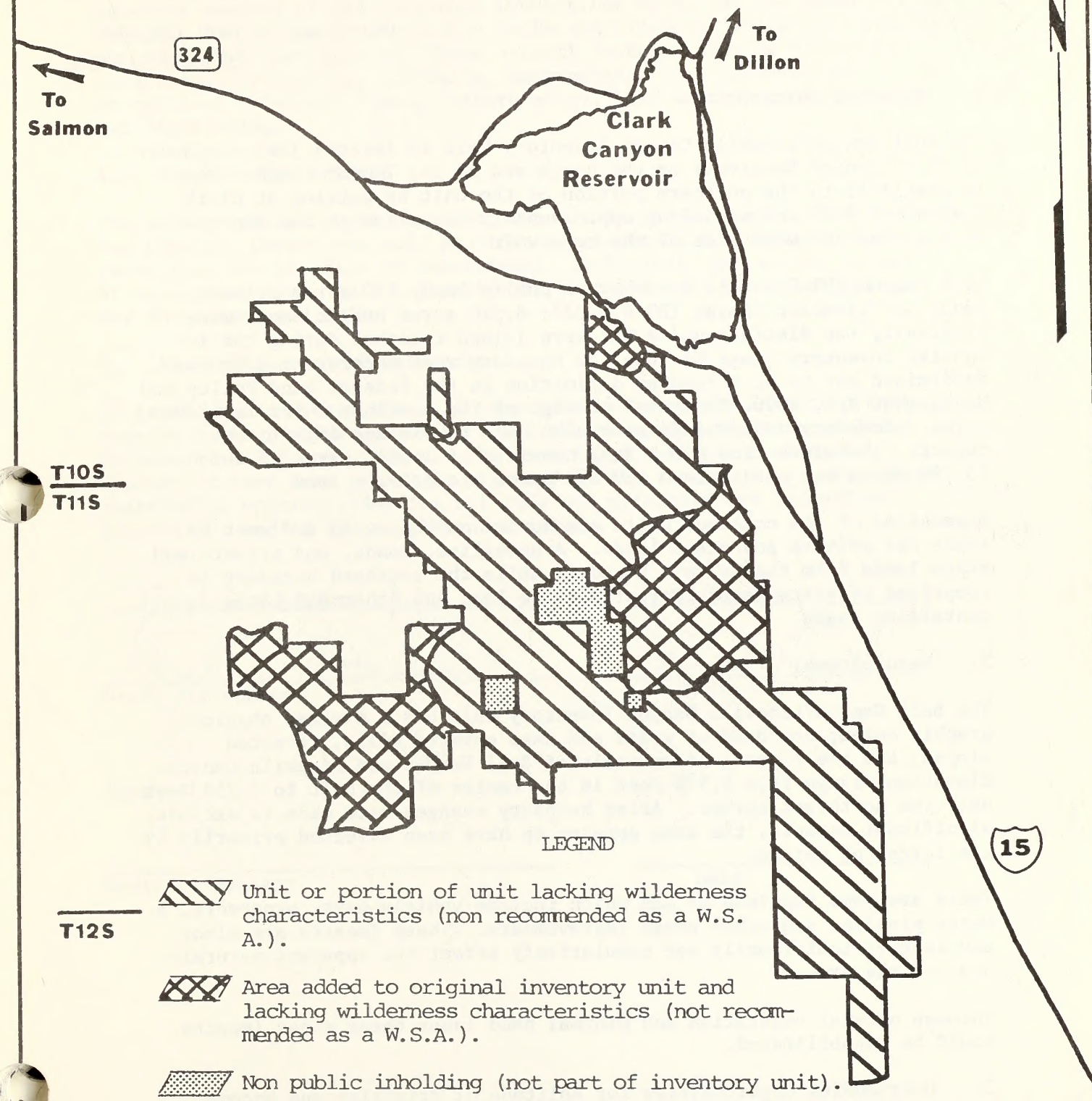
Bell Canyon contains outstanding scenery and opportunities for solitude. However, it too is blocked by private lands containing an abandoned two-story house and other ranch facilities. Bell Canyon, due to its terrain, will undoubtedly remain as it is regardless of designation.

The country around it is heavily impacted by man's activities that severely restrict opportunities for solitude. The concessions that would have to be made to private holdings for mining operations and livestock facility maintenance would not materially reduce man's impact.

Considering all of the detrimental impacts, management recommends against further wilderness consideration.

Jack A. McIntosh
District Manager

LIMEKILN / BELL CANYONS
REVISED DECISION MT-076-026



WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-026

Unit Name Bell Canyon/ Limekiln Canyon

1. Physical Description:

The Bell Canyon/Limekiln Canyon Inventory Unit is located just southwest of Clark Canyon Reservoir at the north end of the Tendoy Range. Access is available to the northern portion of the unit by exiting at Clark Canyon off I-15 and traveling approximately ten miles on the improved road around the west side of the reservoir.

Bell Canyon (MT-076-026; 8,400 acres public land; 160 acres private land) and Limekiln Canyon (MT-076-027; 8,520 acres public land) were originally two distinct units but were joined together during the intensive inventory stage because the boundary road separating them was determined not to be a road by definition in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, 1976. The total acreage of the combined units is 17,080 acres. Boundary adjustments were also made to exclude significant impacts, therefore, the final area consists of 14,540 acres of which 13,740 acres are public land and 800 acres are private land.

Boundaries of the combined units are formed on the north and west by roads and private and state lands. A powerline, roads, and private and state lands form the eastern boundary while the southern boundary is comprised of state lands, Forest Service land and other BLM lands containing roads.

2. Naturalness:

The Bell Canyon/Limekiln Canyon Inventory Unit has a diverse physiographic makeup composed of grass and sage covered hills, forested slopes, and the rugged, steep walls of Bell Canyon and Limekiln Canyon. Elevations range from 8,535 feet in the center of the unit to 5,759 feet near the northeast corner. After boundary changes were made to exclude significant impacts, the area appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

There are some imprints of man which include vehicle ways, prospects, a water pipeline and other range improvements. These impacts are minor and neither individually nor cumulatively affect the apparent naturalness of the area.

Through natural vegetation and minimal hand labor these minor impacts could be rehabilitated.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are available in the unit. Opportunities for solitude exist

because of the topographic diversity, especially in the deep, rugged canyons, and the vegetative cover in the dense forest stands. Recreation opportunities are outstanding due to the varied topography, numerous species of wildlife that inhabit the area, and the interesting geologic formations of the canyon walls and ridgetops which also provide nesting sites for raptors. These natural features provide favorable conditions for hunting, dayhiking, backpacking, rock climbing and scrambling, horseback riding, nature study, bird watching, photography, and sightseeing.

4. Supplemental Values:

The geologic features of the unit, especially those found in Bell Canyon and Limekiln Canyon not only provide opportunities for solitude and recreation but are also of educational, geological, and scenic value. Of ecological value is the possibility that the unit provides habitat for the endangered wolf.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

It is recommended that the Bell Canyon/Limekiln Canyon Inventory Unit receive further wilderness study with the exception of lands excluded because of signficant impact. The area is of sufficient size; it appears to have been primarily affected by the forces of nature; offers outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation; and it has supplemental values.

Andrea Sharon — 08/28/79

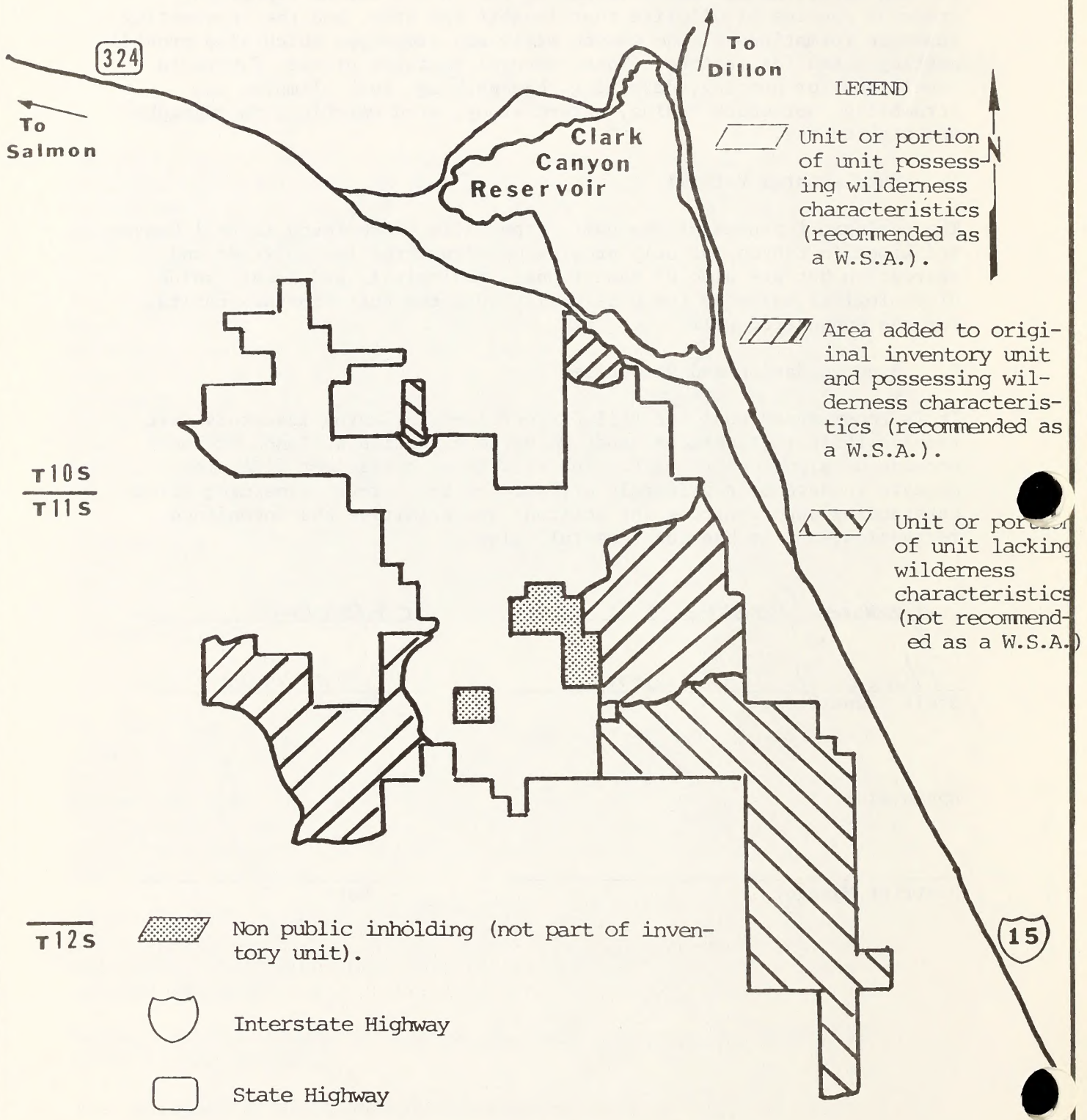
Phoebe J. Patterson — Aug. 28, 1979

Staff Signatures — Date

Approval

District Manager — Date

LIMEKILN/BELL CANYONS
MT-076-026


324
To Salmon
To Dillon
Clark Canyon Reservoir
T10S
T11S
T12S
15
LEGEND
Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).
Area added to original inventory unit and possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.)
Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
Interstate Highway
State Highway
N
R 12 W
R 11 W
R 10 W
Scale 1/2 inch : 1 mile

Wilderness Characteristics

Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-028

Unit Name Henneberry Ridge

1. Physical Description:

This 32,400 acre U-shaped unit is located 12 air miles southwest of Dillon, Montana, and just north of Clark Canyon Reservoir. Two boundary modifications were made, one adding approximately 5,300 acres to the east and the other dropping about 5,800 acres in the western arm of the unit to arrive at a total of 31,900 acres. Of this, 10,111 acres of public land in the central core of the unit meet the qualifications for further wilderness study; all lands are BLM administered. The recommended wilderness study area is bordered on the north by private land along Grasshopper Creek, on the west and east by public land and on the south by State and public lands. Topographically, the recommended area is bordered on the north by Grasshopper Creek and on the south, west and east by high ridges, including Henneberry to the south.

2. Naturalness

The entire Henneberry Ridge inventory unit is characterized by deep drainages (most of which flow northward into Grasshopper Creek), rocky outcrops, and the eight mile ridge after which the unit is named. Elevations range from 5,400 feet near Grasshopper Creek to 7,587 feet on Henneberry Ridge. Sagebrush and grasses cover about 90 percent of the area with scattered patches of trees along the ridge and in some of the drainages. Impacts on apparent naturalness to the entire unit from powerlines, fences, vehicle ways, a radio relay station, an airway beacon, reservoirs, and developed springs and stock troughs are significant, except in the recommended wilderness study area where intrusions are minimal (five and a half miles of vehicle ways and 1 and a half miles of fenceline). These latter, minor intrusions in the recommended area are substantially unnoticeable and could be returned to a natural condition by hand labor.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Because of the excellent screening afforded by the deep, mostly rugged drainages and surrounding ridges in the central core of the inventory unit, outstanding opportunities for solitude are present. The western arm of the Henneberry Ridge unit, technically found to be a unit by itself due to an inventoried road dividing it from the main area, lacks this topographic screening and does not possess outstanding opportunities.

Primitive recreation opportunities throughout the entire unit are not outstanding, although the area does possess certain opportunities such as hiking, backpacking, and bird watching. No single primitive recreation opportunity is outstanding nor is their enough diversity to be considered as such.

4. Supplemental Values:

Henneberry Ridge and the drainages leading off it toward Grasshopper Creek do have scenic value. The area also possesses a large population of raptors, including golden eagles, that have educational and possibly scientific value.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

It is recommended that the 10,111 acre central core of the unit receive further wilderness study, eliminating those lands outside of this area due to significant man-made impacts. It has 5,000 acres or more; it appears to have been primarily affected by the forces of nature; it has outstanding opportunities for solitude; and it has supplemental values.

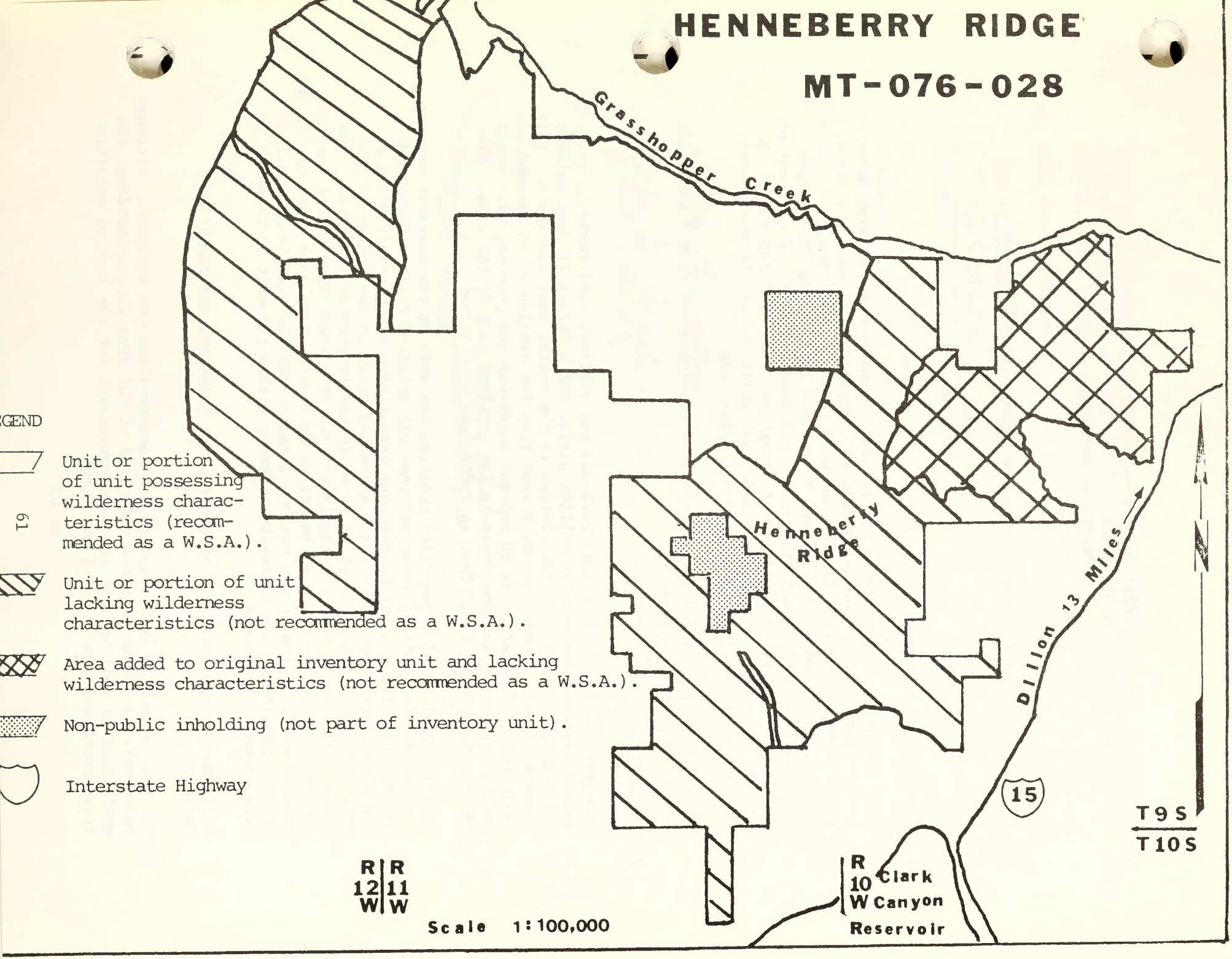
Staff Signatures — Dates: August 24, 1979; 8/30/79

Approval

District Manager — Date: 8/31/79

HENNEBERRY RIDGE

MT-076-028



GEND

T9

Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).

Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

Area added to original inventory unit and lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

Non-public inholding (not part of inventory unit).

Interstate Highway

Wilderness Characteristics

Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-031

Unit Name Cold Spring Creek

1. Physical Description:

Cold Spring Creek is located ten air miles southwest of Dillon, Montana. It is separated from Inventory Unit #28, Henneberry Ridge, by private lands along Grasshopper Creek. The unit contains 7,100 acres of public land. It is bounded to the south by private lands along Grasshopper Creek and the north, east and west by established roads. Configuration of the unit is narrow and somewhat irregular. The northern end of the unit is generally less than one mile wide while the southern end near Grasshopper Creek is two and one-half miles wide.

The area can be reached by a County road leading south from Highway 43, ten miles west of Dillon.

2. Naturalness:

Topographically, Cold Spring Creek has two distinct land forms; a central upland plateau-like area of rolling hills, and a series of deep gulches and canyons leading from the plateau to the north, west and south. This somewhat rugged topography was formed from the erosion of an ancient volcanic cone. Vegetation is 90 percent sagebrush and grasses, with small patches of lodgepole pine trees in the southern part of the area. Elevations range from 5,600 feet to 7,036 feet.

Impacts consist of a powerline crossing the unit in the northern end for one and one-half miles; seven and one-half miles of vehicle ways; past mining disturbances near Grasshopper Creek; nine and one-half miles of fenceline, and a number of small disturbed areas in the center of the unit where past drilling has occurred to sample mineral resources. The fences and vehicle ways are highly visible when travelling within the unit and have a definite negative impact on apparent naturalness. Because of the spotted distribution of the various impacts, and the relatively small size of the unit, there are virtually no areas within the unit where human impact cannot be observed.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The unit generally lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude. Although opportunities in the southern one-third of the area are outstanding, the small size of this portion does not compensate for the lack of opportunities throughout the rest of the unit.

Types of primitive recreation that occur on this unit are hunting and day hiking. Opportunities exist for horseback riding, winter sports, and sightseeing. None would be considered outstanding.

4. Supplemental Values:

Grasshopper Creek Canyon shows evidence of historic mining activity. No other values of significance were identified.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

The area is not recommended for further wilderness study. It lacks naturalness and does not possess outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation.

Stephen L. Bates — August 28, 1979

John L. Humphreys — 8/30/79

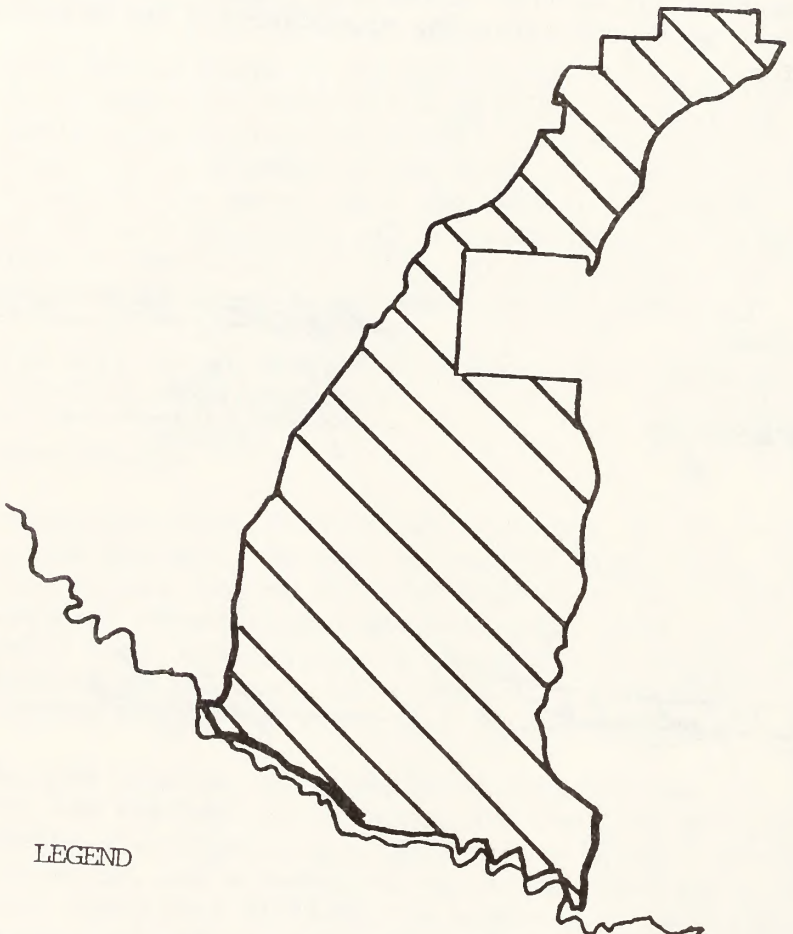
Staff Signatures — Dates

Approval

District Manager — 8/31/79 Date

COLD SPRINGS CREEK

MT-076-031



T 7 S
T 8 S

LEGEND

Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

Interstate Highway

T 9 S

Grasshopper Cr

To Barretts

15

R 11 W | R 10 W

Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-029

Unit Name Bachelor Mountain

1. Physical Description:

The Bachelor Mountain Unit is located 5 miles southwest of Bannack, Montana. The area is accessible by several county roads and unimproved dirt roads.

The eastern boundary is formed by the Bannack and Sage Creek road and one unnamed road. The southern boundary is formed by an unnamed road and by the border between public and private lands. The western boundary follows the South Fork of Watson Creek road and also borders non-public lands. The northern boundary is formed by powerline M 0385.

The unit boundaries enclose approximately 13,000 acres of public land and 640 acres of state land.

2. Naturalness:

This area is characterized by rolling hills and broad flat ridges. The most obvious land feature is Bachelor Mountain which rises above the average elevation of 6,000 feet to a height of 7,563 feet. The lowest elevation is 5,920 feet near the eastern boundary.

The vegetation is almost entirely sagebrush and grasses. No more than 150 acres of trees occur within the unit.

There are several substantially noticeable imprints of man's work in this area. These include 25 miles of vehicle ways, some of which are heavily used; 3 developed water wells sites; 2 stock tanks; 4 earthen dams, approximately 100 feet across and 15 feet high; 18 miles of fencing, some of which impedes the movement of antelope; and a windmill. Less noticeable is a pipeline which traverses the northeast portion of the unit for approximately 3½ miles. All of these impacts combined have a highly adverse affect on the naturalness of the Bachelor Mountain Unit.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The overall lack of topographic diversity and vegetative screening virtually negates any possibilities for experiencing outstanding opportunities for solitude.

Primitive and unconfined recreational opportunities are big game and grouse hunting, but these are not outstanding. Hiking, horseback riding and wildlife photography are potentially outstanding opportunities within the area.

4. Supplemental Values:

Portions of the unit serve as antelope summer and winter range, and deer and elk winter range. Sagegrouse also winter in the unit. Several spots in the eastern half of the area are considered crucial sagegrouse strutting and nesting areas.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

Though the Bachelor Mountain Unit meets some of the criteria necessary for wilderness, it does not appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature due to the number and variety of human impacts. Therefore, this area is not recommended for further study.

John Quinn — August 29, 1979

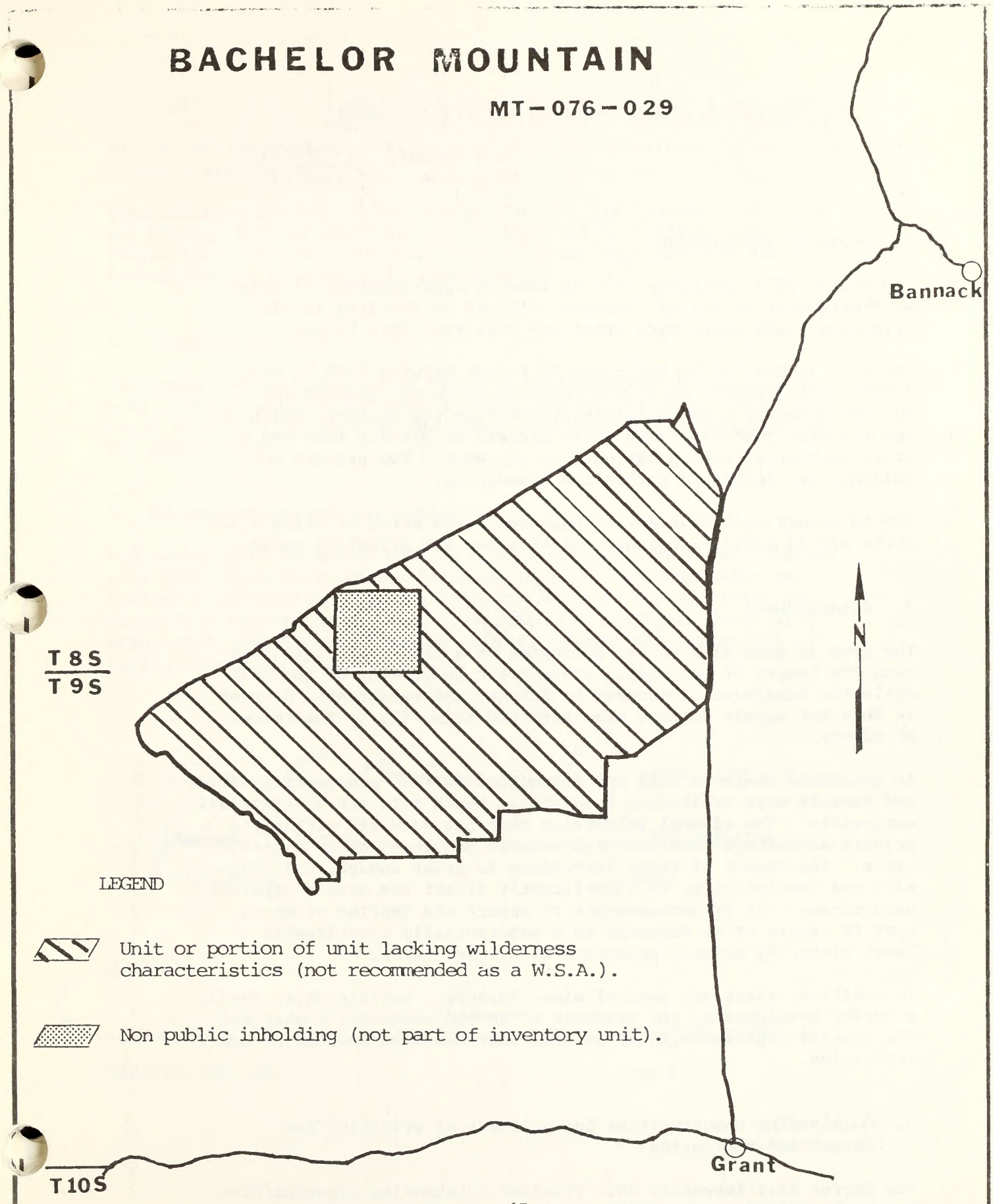
Staff Signatures — Date

Approval

District Manager — 8/31/79 Date

BACHELOR MOUNTAIN

MT-076-029



Wilderness Characteristics Narrative Summary

Unit number: MT-076-033
Unit name: Garret Hill

1. Physical description:

The Garret Hill Inventory Unit is located approximately 21 miles west-northwest of Dillon, Montana. Access to the area is via primitive roads along Dyce Creek and West Fork Dyce Creek.

The unit is bounded on the north by Forest Service RARE II area 1-008, East Pioneer, of 93,859 roadless acres recommended for further planning. Roads primarily comprise the western, southern, and eastern boundaries with three parcels of private land and a state section adjoining the unit on the west. Two private inholdings are contained within the boundaries.

The inventory unit boundary encompasses 1,160 acres of which 1,120 acres are in public ownership and 40 acres are privately owned.

2. Naturalness:

The area is generally hilly, dominated by a prominent ridge that runs the length of the unit. Trees cover 50 percent of the unit while the remainder is covered by grasses and sagebrush. However, it does not appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

An abandoned tungsten mill and associated debris, prospecting sites, and vehicle ways exhibiting conspicuous bench cuts are substantially noticeable. The mineral extraction that has occurred within the private inholdings constitutes an outside impact of major significance. The impact of these intrusions is great enough, individually and cumulatively, to significantly affect the area's apparent naturalness. It is unreasonable to expect the imprint of man's work to return or be returned to a substantially unnoticeable level either by natural processes or by hand labor.

In addition, there are several minor impacts: vehicle ways, fences, a spring development, and evidence of an old selective timber cut. The overall impression is of an area that has been scarred by man's activities.

3. Outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation:

The Garret Hill Inventory Unit provides outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation when considered in conjunction with the contiguous RARE II area 1-008.

By itself, the unit's narrow configuration and density of man-made intrusions are a hindrance to the realization of solitude. However, in conjunction with the East Pioneer area, opportunities for solitude are greatly enhanced.

Opportunities for recreation within the unit are limited to hunting and hiking, both of which are not of outstanding quality. But in conjunction with the contiguous RARE II area, opportunities for recreation are substantially increased.

4. Supplemental values:

This unit contains ecological features of supplemental value. The area provides habitat for sage and blue grouse, antelope, deer, and moose during all or part of the year. Portions of the unit provide elk winter range.

5. Recommendation and rationale:

The Garret Hill Inventory Unit is not recommended for classification as a Wilderness Study Area. Although it meets the size criteria, possesses outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation in conjunction with the contiguous RARE II area 1-008, and has supplemental values, it does not appear primarily natural in character.

James R Foote — 08-24-79

Andrea Sharon — 08/28/79

Staff signatures — Date

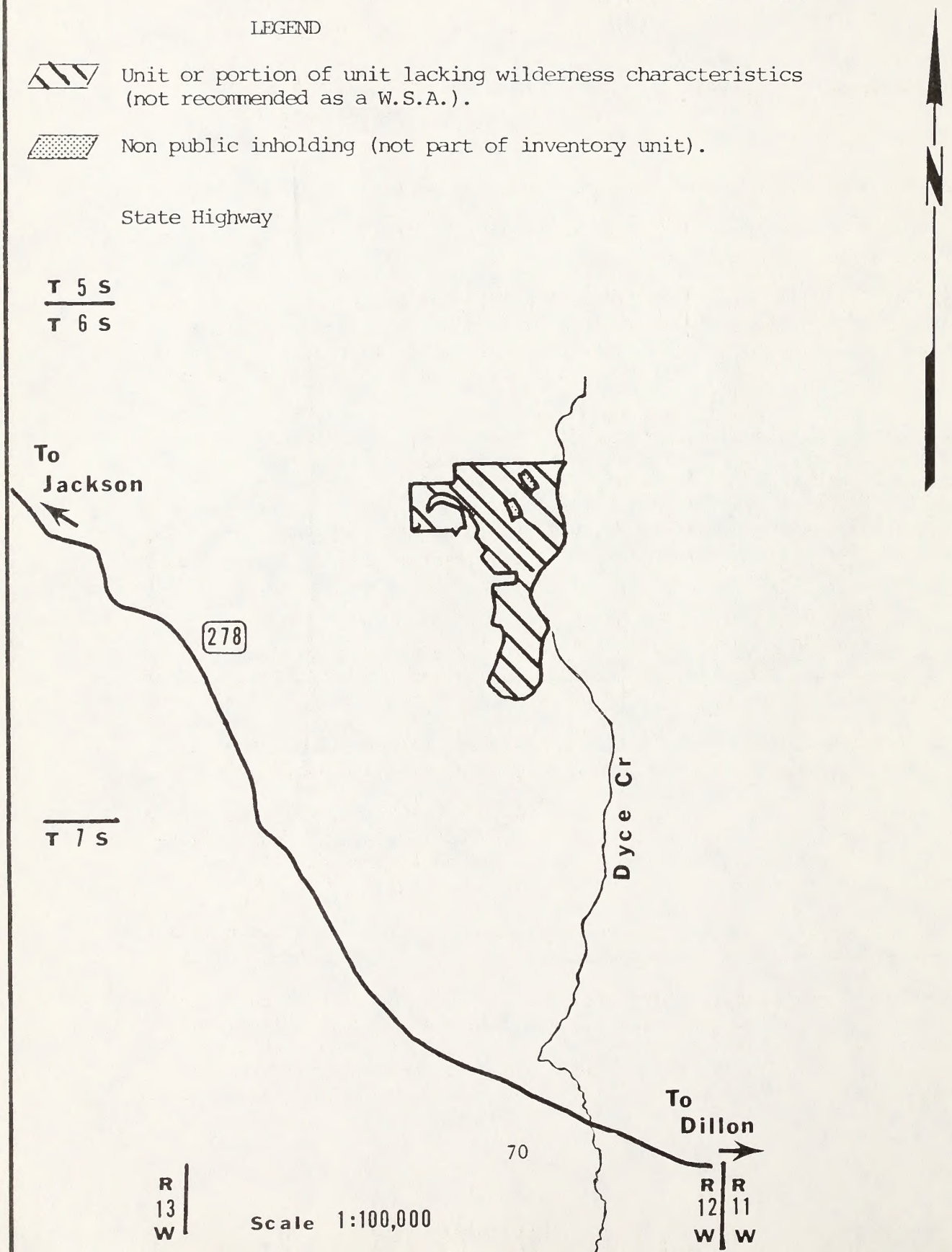
Approval

[signature] — 8/31/79

District Manager — Date

GARRET HILL

MT-076-033



Wilderness Characteristics
Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-042

Unit Name Red Rock River Islands #2

1. Physical Description:

The Red Rock River Islands inventory unit is located on the Red Rock River in the Centennial Valley, about 5 miles down river from the outlet of lower Red Rocks Lake. Access to these islands is either by boat or by the northside county road.

The unit is comprised of 5 islands totalling 3 or 4 acres. One island is located approximately one-quarter mile downstream from the other four, which are clustered closely together. The river here is no more than 60 feet wide and the islands are separated from shore by channels less than 10 feet wide.

The islands and surrounding land are all in public ownership.

2. Naturalness:

All five islands appear to be primarily natural and untrammeled by works of man. They are entirely covered by tall marshy grass. The islands do not appear to be grazed by cattle, perhaps because of the undesirability of this variety of marsh grass.

The islands are located where offsite intrusions are significant: all the islands are located less than 200 yards from, and in direct view of, the county road that runs up the north side of the Centennial Valley.

The downstream island is surrounded by cattle allotments and a highly visible jack-leg fence runs down to the river within 50 yards of it.

The upper islands are approached within 20 yards by a vehicle-way where it accesses a cattle watering yard. The yard consists of double jack-legged fence which crosses the river. This development is 20 yards upstream and in direct view from the islands.

3. Outstanding Opportunity for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

There is simply little opportunity for solitude inherent in these islands. Their proximity to fences, stock developments and a gravel road, in combination with their small size does not support a sense of solitude. Because of the size of these islands and their previously discussed surroundings, the opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation is negligible.

4. Supplemental Values:

This unit contains no unique ecological, geological or other features of educational, scenic, or historical value.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

This unit is not recommended for wilderness study. The naturalness of the islands themselves is unaffected by works of man. However, due to their small size, their proximity to the bank and the immediately surrounding imprints of man, the sense of naturalness is considerably diminished. They offer little opportunity for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

Philip H. Cushman — AUGUST 22, 1979

Andrea Sharon — 08/28/79

Staff Signatures — Date

Approval:

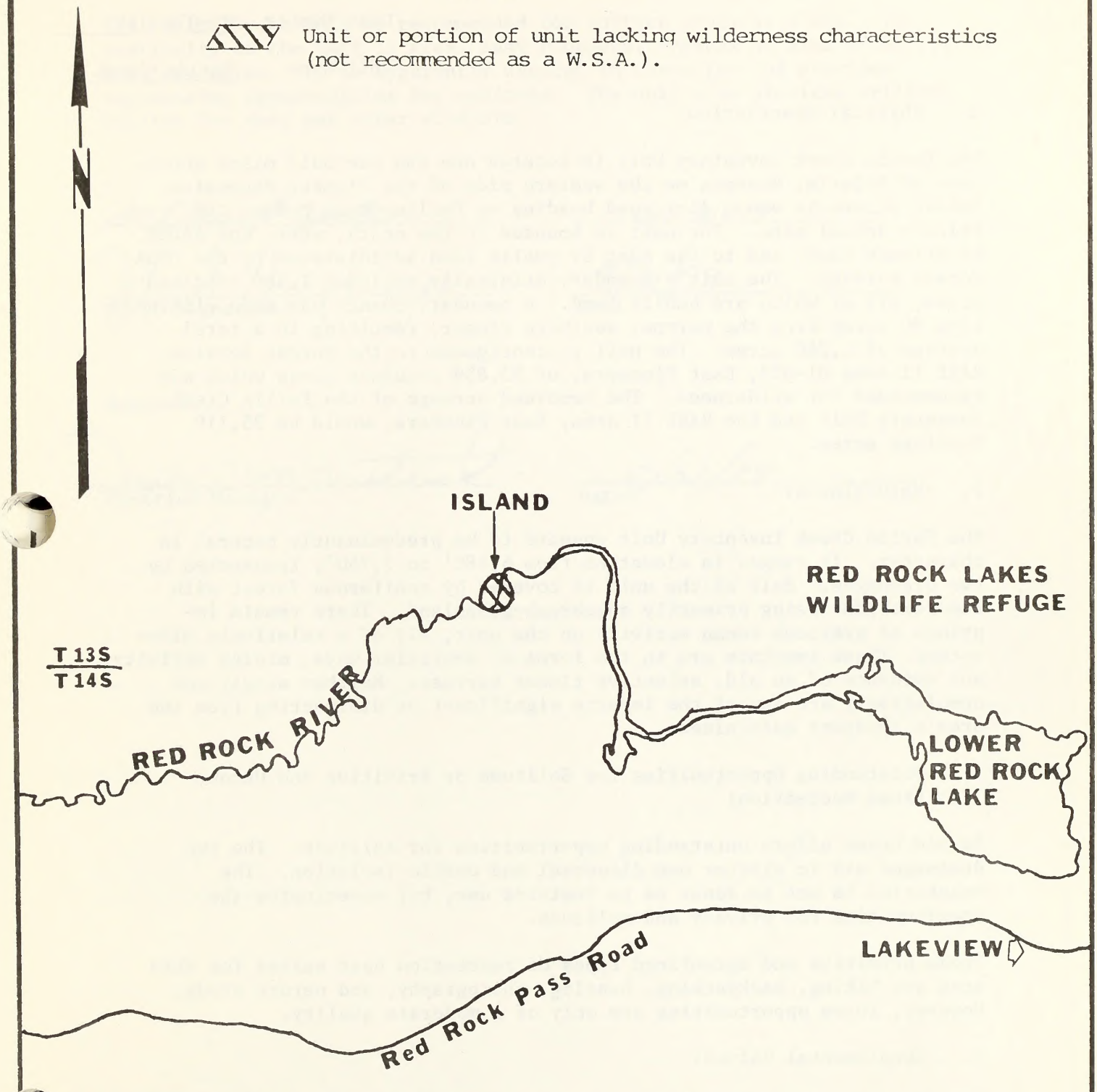
District Manager — 8/31/79 Date

RED ROCK RIVER ISLAND #2

MT-076-042

LEGEND

Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).



R 3 W | R 2 W

Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-034

Unit Name Farlin Creek

1. Physical Description:

The Farlin Creek Inventory Unit is located one and one-half miles southeast of Polaris, Montana on the western side of the Pioneer Mountains. Public access is via a dirt road heading up Farlin Creek behind the Polaris school site. The unit is bounded to the north, west, and south by private land, and to the east by public land administered by the USDA Forest Service. The unit's boundary originally enclosed 1,340 roadless acres, all of which are public land. A boundary change was made eliminating 80 acres from the narrow, southern finger, resulting in a total acreage of 1,260 acres. The unit is contiguous to the Forest Service RARE II Area 01-008, East Pioneers, of 93,859 roadless acres which was recommended for wilderness. The combined acreage of the Farlin Creek Inventory Unit and the RARE II Area, East Pioneers, would be 95,119 roadless acres.

2. Naturalness:

The Farlin Creek Inventory Unit appears to be predominantly natural in character. It ranges in elevation from 6,480' to 7,760', transected by two drainages. Half of the unit is covered by coniferous forest with the remainder being primarily sagebrush-grassland. There remain imprints of previous human activity on the unit, all of a relatively minor nature. These imprints are in the forms of vehicular ways, mining activity, and evidence of an old, selective timber harvest. Neither singly nor cumulatively are any of the impacts significant or distracting from the area's apparent naturalness.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Farlin Creek offers outstanding opportunities for solitude. The two drainages aid in visitor use dispersal and enable isolation. The vegetation is not so dense as to restrict use, but accentuates the opportunities for privacy and solitude.

Those primitive and unconfined types of recreation best suited for this area are hiking, backpacking, hunting, photography, and nature study. However, these opportunities are only of a moderate quality.

4. Supplemental Values:

The Farlin Creek Inventory Unit supports populations of deer, blue and sagegrouse, in addition to several non-game species.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

The Farlin Creek Unit is recommended for further study as a WSA. Its contiguity to the RARE II Area, East Pioneers, creates an area of 95,119 roadless acres. It is apparently natural in character and provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. The unit also provides critical habitat for deer and other wildlife.

Stephen P. Gates — 05-31-79

John L. Humphreys — 8/31/79

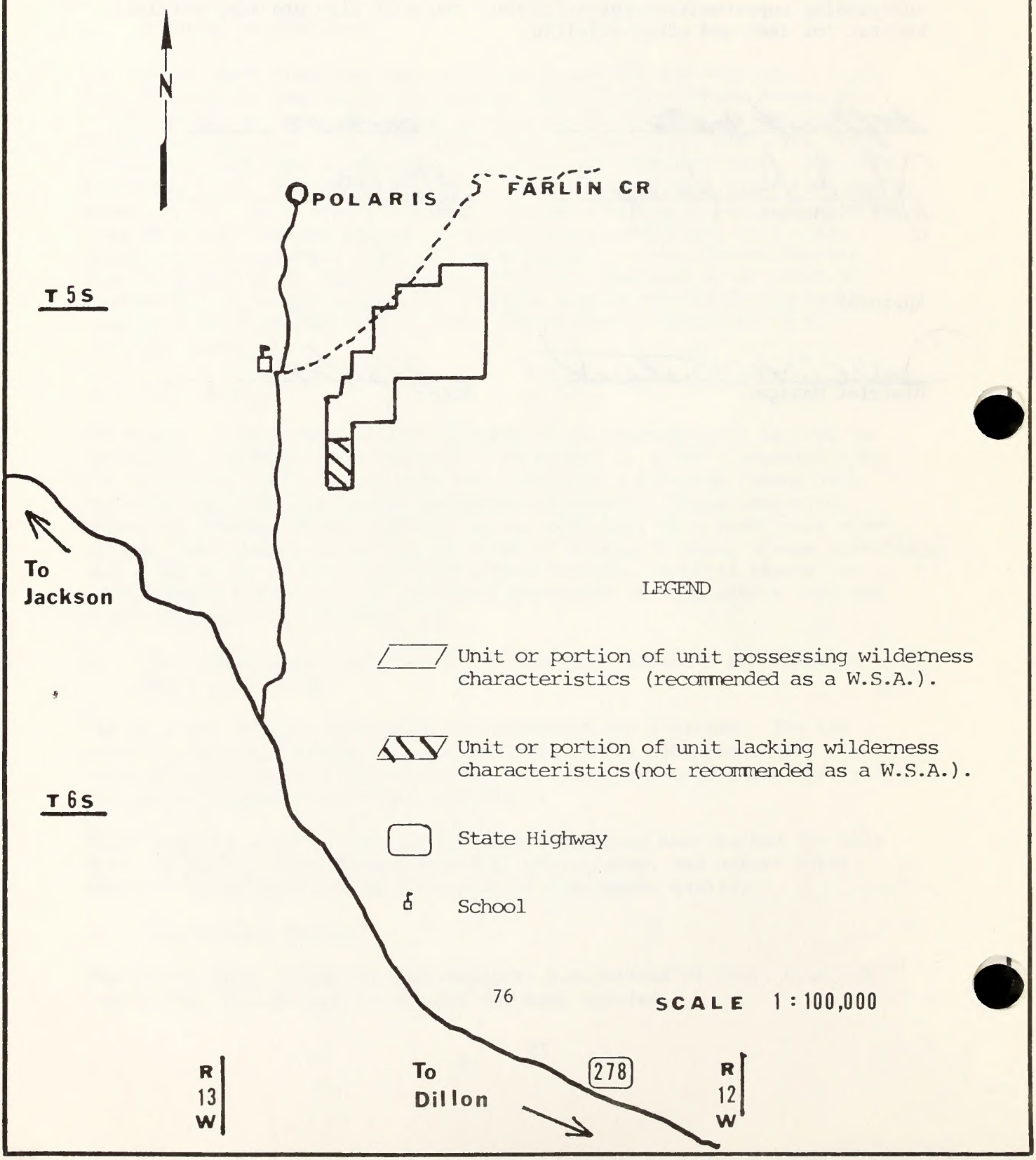
Staff Signatures — Date

Approval

District Manager — Date 8/31/79

FARLIN CREEK

MT-076-034



Wilderness Characteristics

Unit Number MT-076-043

Unit Name Red Rock River Islands #1

Physical Description:

In the initial phase of the wilderness inventory of public lands, information obtained from aerial photographs indicated a three to four acre island existed on the edge of the Red Rock River approximately one mile west of Lower Red Rock Lake Dam. A situation evaluation was prepared for the island. The limited information available made it impossible to determine if the island did or did not clearly and obviously have wilderness potential. The island was carried forward to the intensive inventory phase at the wilderness review process.

The intensive inventory determined that no distinct island exists. The river has changed its channel, rejoining the former island to the lands on the north bank of the river. Even during high water this unit could no longer be considered as an island.

Recommendation and Rationale:

As this unit qualified for intensive inventory solely on the basis of its status as an island, it was dropped as an inventory unit when it was found not to be an island. No further consideration in the wilderness review process is recommended.

John K Mercer — august 24 1979

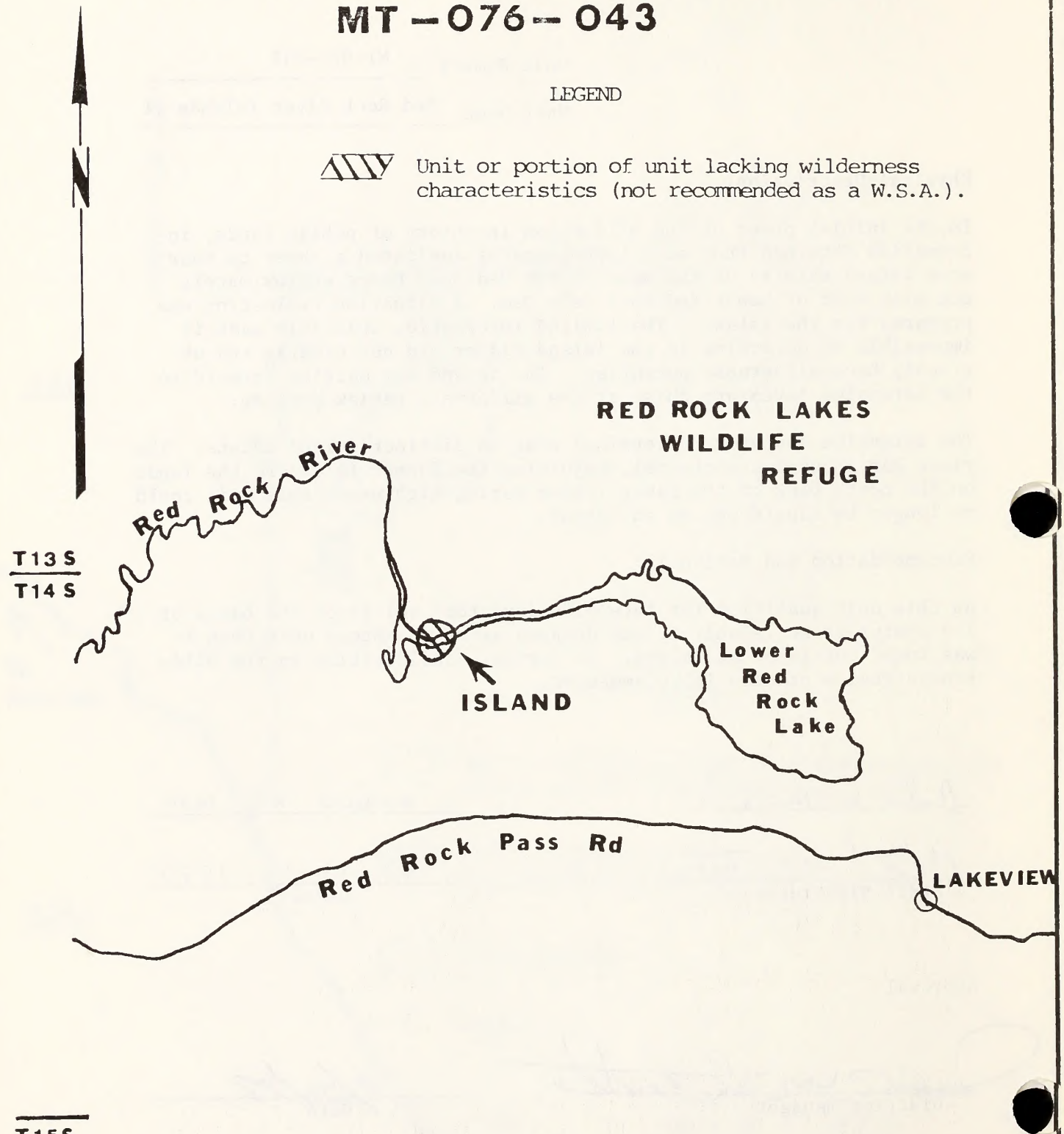
Philip L Crimmon — August 24, 1979

Staff Signatures — Dates

Approval

District Manager — 8/31/79 Date

RED ROCK RIVER ISLANDS #1
MT-076-043



WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS
NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number: MT-076-047

Unit Name: Jimmy New Creek

1. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Jimmy New Creek is located one mile north of and just across the Big Hole River from Wise River, Montana. The original size of the unit was 6,320 acres but boundary modifications designed to exclude certain areas with significant impacts, and to revise road locations reduced the area to 6,275 acres. The unit is bounded on the north, east and west by established roads and on the south by private lands along the Big Hole River. The area is adjacent to the Beaverhead National Forest to the north. At its widest point, the unit is two and one-half miles; its length is 6 miles. Forty acres of private land are included in the unit boundaries.

2. NATURALNESS:

The Jimmy New Creek Unit consists of five major and associated minor drainages that lead southward toward the Big Hole River. The area is approximately 50% forested with the remainder being equally divided between riparian vegetation in the drainages, sagebrush, and grasses. Elevations range from 7,474 feet near the northern border to 5,600 feet along the Big Hole River.

Impacts on apparent naturalness were prevalent throughout the area. Two major and two minor clearcuts in the northeastern and northcentral portions of the unit are significantly noticeable and were excluded from the revised boundary (of 6,275 acres). Although excluded, these areas still negatively affect the apparent naturalness of the unit in the immediate vicinity of the cuts. Other impacts consist of a one mile long by three hundred to six hundred foot wide thinning project that extends southward from the northern border; twelve linear miles of vehicle ways; two and one-half miles of fenceline, and a stock tank. Vehicle ways penetrate virtually all of the drainages, most of the ridgetops, and are substantially noticeable due to this locational pattern. Their cumulative effect on apparent naturalness is significant; combined with the aforementioned intrusions, the unit lacks the characteristic of naturalness.

3. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE AND PRIMITIVE RECREATION:

The opportunities to avoid the sights and sounds of others in the unit is outstanding. Topographic screening is very good in parts of the area due to the many drainages and transecting ridges and knolls. The forests and riparian vegetation also help provide the visitor with the opportunity to be well screened from other users.

Primitive recreation opportunities are present, but are not outstanding.

Hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities are available as this area is critical winter range for mule deer and elk and also supports a large population of blue grouse. Hiking opportunities are also present due to the diversity of terrain and variety of vegetation, but are not of outstanding quality.

4. Supplemental Values:

Scenic values are present due to the numerous rock outcroppings, diversity of terrain and forested patches interspersed with sagebrush meadows. Elk and mule deer critical winter range presents an ecological feature of educational and scientific value.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

Although possessing the size and outstanding opportunity characteristics, Jimmy New Creek does not have the characteristic of naturalness and, therefore, is not recommended for wilderness study area status.

Stephen F. Gates — August 28, 1979

John S. Murphy — 8/30/79

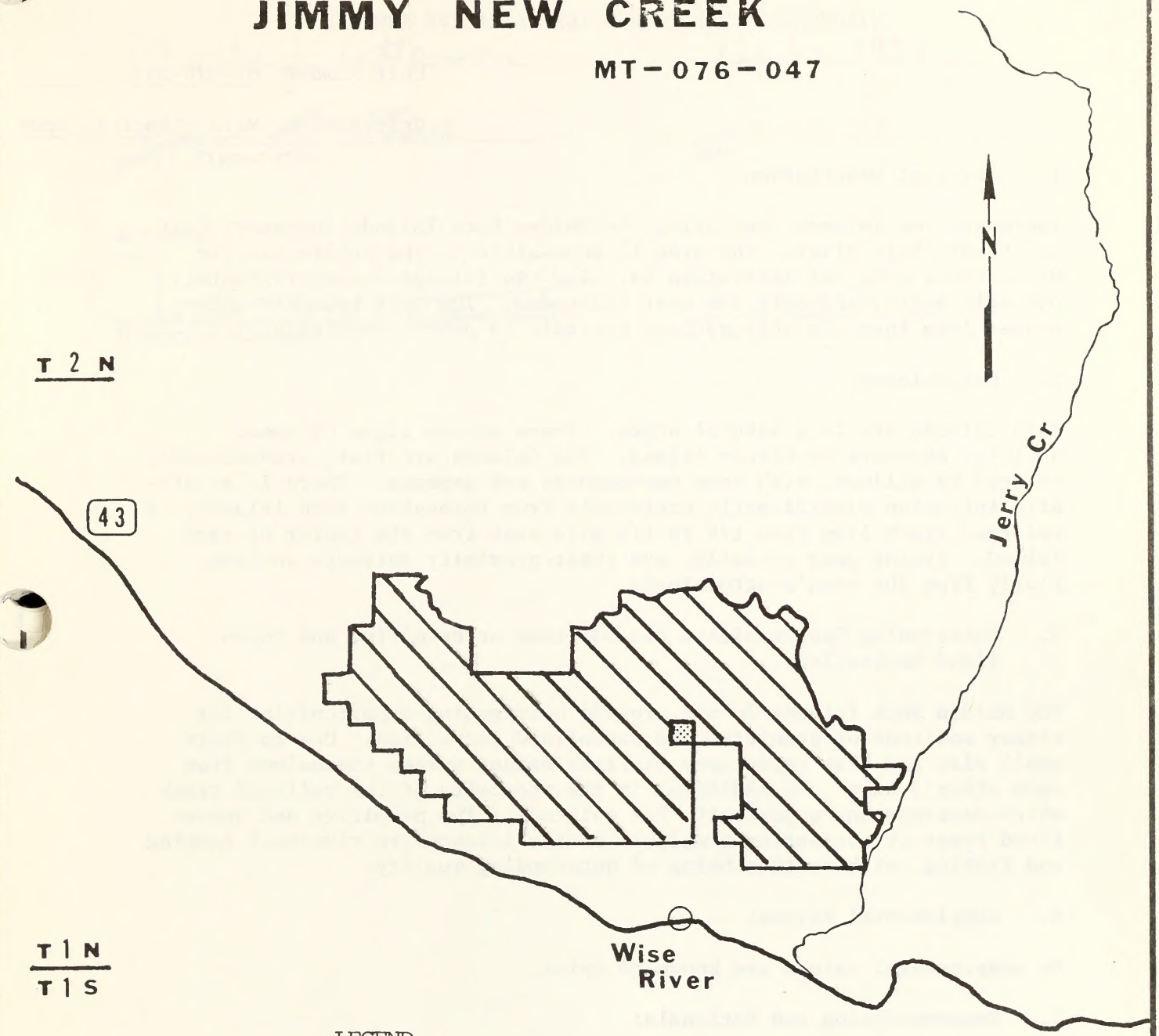
Staff Signatures — Dates

Approval

District Manager — 8/31/79 Date

JIMMY NEW CREEK

MT-076-047



LEGEND

Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).

State Highway

R 12 W | R 11 W | R 10 W

Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-051

Unit Name Maiden Rock Islands

1. Physical Description:

There are two islands comprising the Maiden Rock Islands Inventory Unit on the Big Hole River. The area is accessible to the public via the Moose Creek exit off Interstate 15. The two islands are approximately one mile apart, and both are near midstream. The unit boundary encompasses less than one acre of land entirely in public ownership.

2. Naturalness:

Both islands are in a natural state. There are no signs of human activity anywhere on either island. The islands are flat, predominately covered by willows, with some cottonwoods and grasses. There is an offsite intrusion significantly noticeable from throughout both islands. A railroad track lies from 1/8 to 1/4 mile east from the center of each island. Trains pass by daily, and their proximity detracts substantially from the area's naturalness.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The Maiden Rock Islands do not provide outstanding opportunities for either solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. Due to their small size and flat topography visitors cannot screen themselves from each other's view. In addition, is the proximity of the railroad track which destroys any opportunity for solitude. The primitive and unconfined types of recreation available on the islands are riverboat camping and fishing, with neither being of outstanding quality.

4. Supplemental Values:

No supplemental values are known to exist.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

The Maiden Rock Islands are not recommended to be further studied as a WSA. Their size is insufficient so as to make practicable their preservation and use in an unimpaired condition. Their natural character is substantially affected by the close proximity of a railroad line, and they do not offer any outstanding opportunities for either solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

Phoebe J Patterson — Aug. 29, 1979

James R Foote — 08-29-79

Staff Signatures — Date

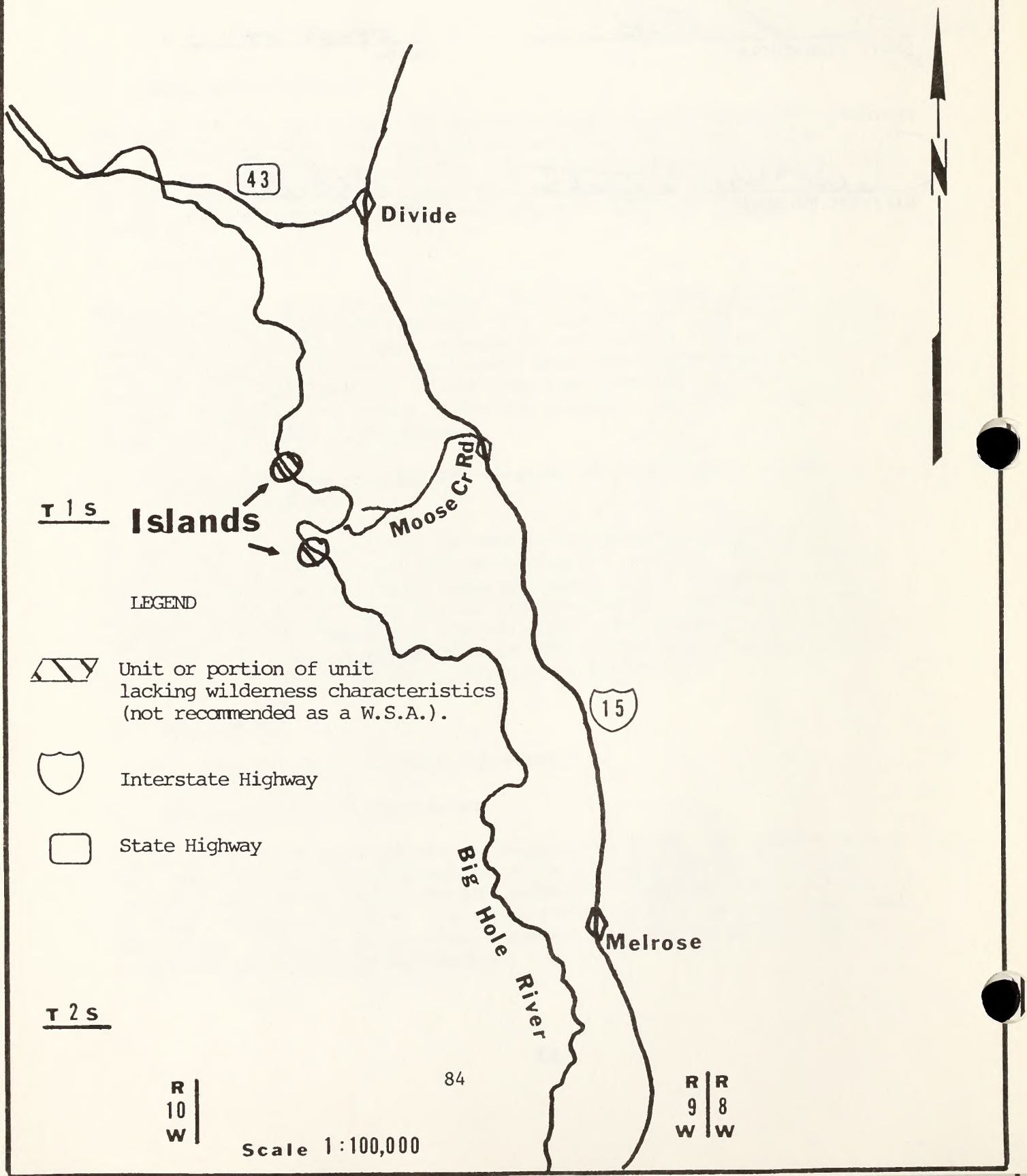
Approval

[signature] — 8/31/79

District Manager — Date

MAIDEN ROCK ISLANDS

MT-076-051



WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-054

Unit Name Nez Perce Hollow

1. Physical Description

The Nez Perce Hollow Unit is located approximately four miles east of Melrose and seven miles west of Twin Bridges, Montana. The area is accessible via county and private roads from east and west.

With the exception of our state section and eight private ownerships, the unit is entirely bounded by public and private roads. The original inventory unit contained 9,750 acres of public land and 200 acres of private inholdings.

During the intensive inventory three boundaries adjustments were made based on road criteria. Two small deletions totaling 152 acres were made in the southwest and west central edges of the unit due to the presence of interior roads. One large addition of approximately 3,145 acres was attached to the original southeast, corner because the boundary way did not meet the road criteria status.

The net result of these adjustments increased the size of the area by 2,993 acres. The new boundaries enclose a total area of approximately 12,743 acres of roadless public land and 40 acres of private inholdings.

2. Naturalness:

Nez Perce Hollow Unit is characterized by rolling sagebrush and grass covered hills dissected by shallow, dry drainages. Average elevations vary from prairies of 6,000 feet to hilltops of 6,600 feet. The area does not appear to be primarily natural due to the abundance of man's imprints.

The apparent naturalness of the unit is impacted by ten miles of vehicle ways, sixteen miles of fences, numerous range improvements (including a windmill, a large, rainwater catchment and numerous watering tanks), mine developments and open, prospect pits. The cumulative effect of these activities do have a substantial impact on the naturalness of the area. Rehabilitation of the major disturbances is unfeasible.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation cannot be construed as outstanding within the unit. Solitude is limited due to the lack of vegetative and topographic screening. Visitors within any portion of the unit could not be secluded from the sights and sounds of other users.

Recreational opportunities available within the unit are horseback riding, day hiking, and antelope hunting. The attributes of the area limit the diversity of activities possible and there are no individual opportunities of outstanding quality.

4. Supplemental Values:

There are no features of scientific, educational, scenic or historic value known within the area.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

The Nez Perce Hollow Unit is not recommended for classification as a Wilderness Study Area. Although the area meets the size criteria, it does not appear primarily natural and possesses no outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreations.

Bradley Rickford — 8/29/79

Richard E. Ward — 8/29/79

Staff Signatures — Date

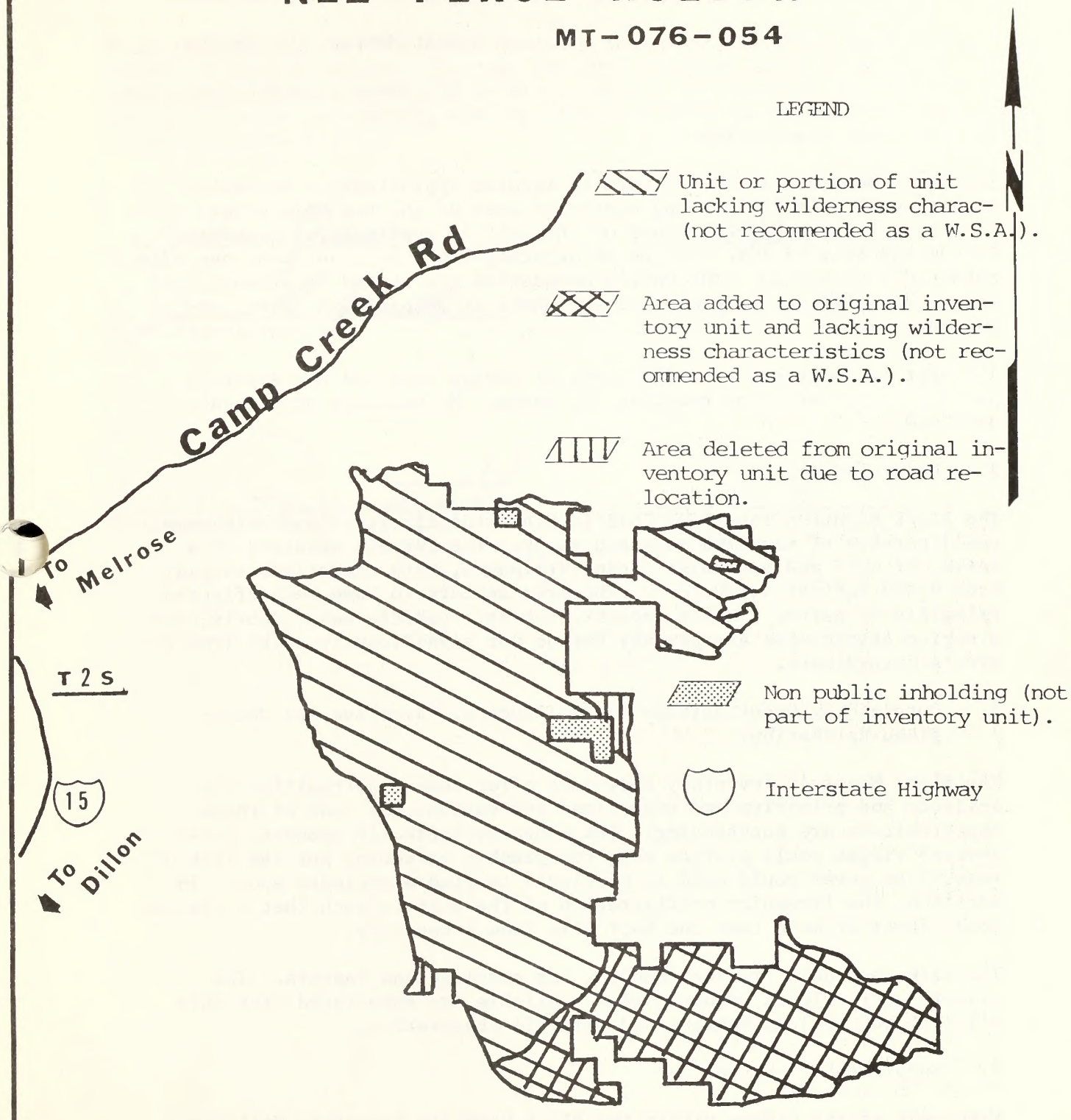
Approval

Harold A. Mitchell — 8/31/79

District Manager — Date

NEZ PERCE HOLLOW

MT-076-054


LEGEND
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness charac- (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
Area added to original inventory unit and lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
Area deleted from original inventory unit due to road relocation.
Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
Interstate Highway
N
Camp Creek Rd
To Melrose
T 2 S
15
To Dillon
T 3 S
R 9 W
R 8 W
R 7 W
Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-059

Unit Name Block Mountain

1. Physical Description:

The Block Mountain Inventory Unit is located approximately ten miles southwest of Twin Bridges and north and west of the Big Hole River. Access to the northern portions of the unit is available by traveling nine miles west of Twin Bridges on existing improved roads then one mile south on a dirt road. The unit's boundaries are formed by private land on all sides except on the northeast where it adjoins BLM lands containing roads.

The unit is comprised of 6,700 acres of public land and two separate parcels of private land totaling 320 acres. No boundary adjustments were made.

2. Naturalness:

The Block Mountain Inventory Unit is predominantly grassland with some small patches of sage and mountain shrub. The terrain consists of a series of east and southeast facing drainages, with elevations ranging from 6,029 feet to 4,840 feet. The area appears to have been affected primarily by nature. Minor impacts such as: vehicle ways, debris, and a spring development are present but do not significantly deter from the area's naturalness.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The Block Mountain Inventory Unit does offer some opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation, but none of these opportunities are outstanding. The characteristically rounded, grass covered ridges would provide some topographic screening but the lack of vegetative cover would make it difficult to find a secluded spot. In addition, the irregular configuration of the unit is such that a visitor would never be more than one half mile from a boundary.

The inventory unit provides habitat for antelope and raptors. The primary recreational opportunities available are associated with this wildlife and include hunting and wildlife observation.

4. Supplemental Values:

From most of the ridges within the Block Mountain Inventory Unit there are panoramic views of several mountain ranges that are of scenic value.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

It is recommended that the Block Mountain Inventory Unit be dropped from further wilderness study. Although the unit contains 6,700 acres of public land, appears primarily natural, and has supplemental values, it does not provide outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

Andrea Sharon — 08/31/79

James R. Foote — 08-31-79

Staff Signatures — Date

Approval

District Manager — Date 8/31/79

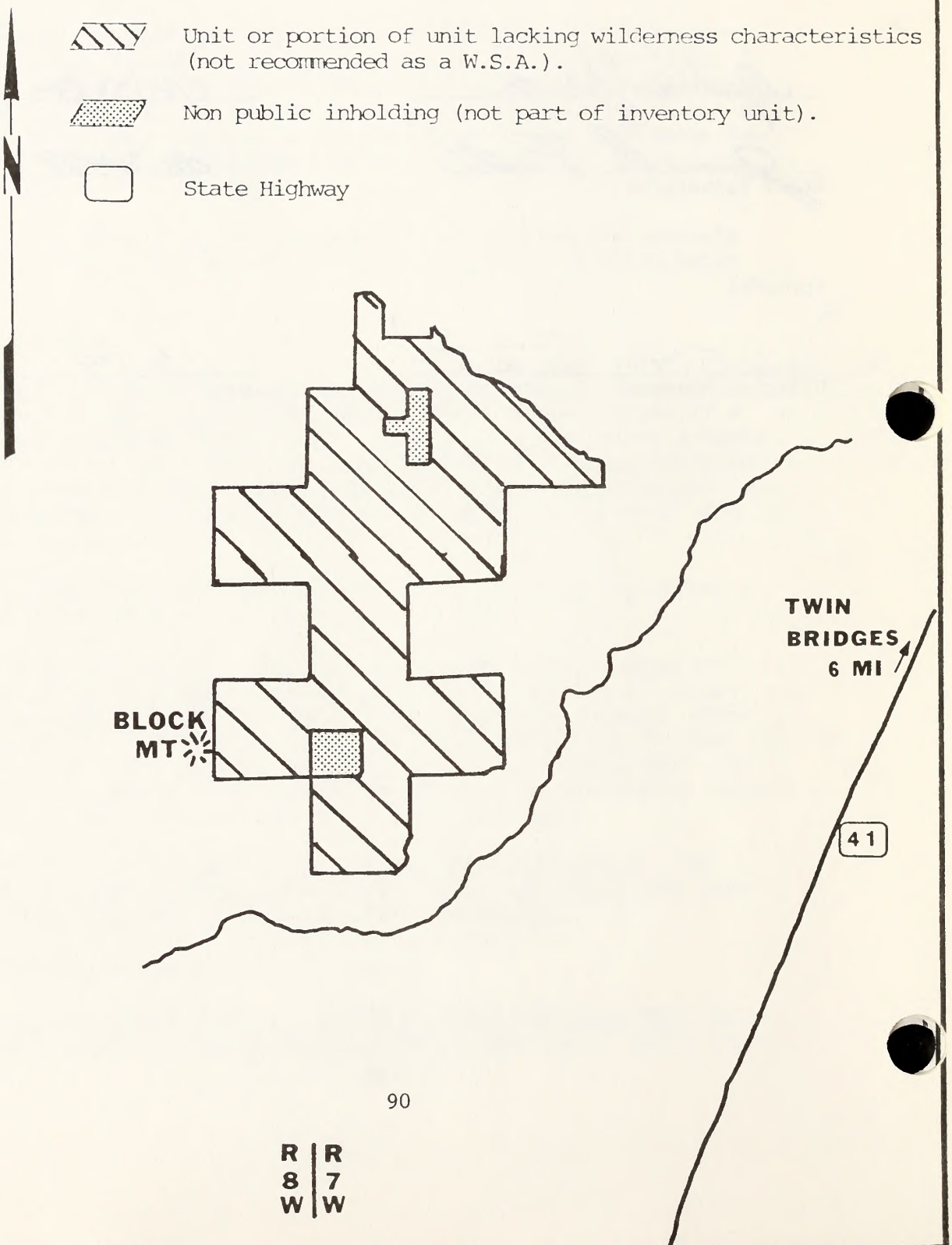
BLOCK MOUNTAIN
MT – 076 – 059

LEGEND

Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).

State Highway



WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTIC NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-063

Unit Name Tobacco Root Tack-ons

1. Physical Description:

This unit is located approximately 25 miles southeast of Butte, Montana. The unit is a combination of two separate parcels of land. The two parcels are units 063 and 064. The combined size of these units is 880 acres, of which 20 acres are private land. These two parcels are situated on and near the foothills along the western slope of the Tobacco Root Mountain Range. The boundaries are formed by private and Forest Service lands. The unit is contiguous to RARE II area B-1013, Middle Mountain Tobacco Roots, which was recommended for further planning by the Forest Service. The area is accessible by county and private roads.

2. Naturalness

This area contains high open grasslands and meadows, timbered slopes and perennial streams. A few impacts exist. These include vehicle ways, grazing, fences, spring developments, some mining sites, and the remains of cabins. Overall, these impacts are minor and do not detract from the area's naturalness. All of these impacts could be rehabilitated either by hand labor or by natural processes.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Because of topographic diversity and vegetative screening, the area offers outstanding opportunities for solitude.

Outstanding opportunities for several primitive recreational activities also exist in this unit. These include: hunting, dayhiking, nature study, and photography.

4. Supplemental Values:

The area provides elk and deer winter range. Antelope use portions of the area year-round.

There are also excellent views of the higher peaks in the Tobacco Root Mountains and of the surrounding mountain ranges and valleys.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

Further wilderness study is recommended. The area meets all the criteria of Section 2C of the 1964 Wilderness Act which is discussed above. Thus the area warrants further study.

John Ginance — August 29, 1979

Andrea Sharon — 08/29/79

Staff Signatures — Date

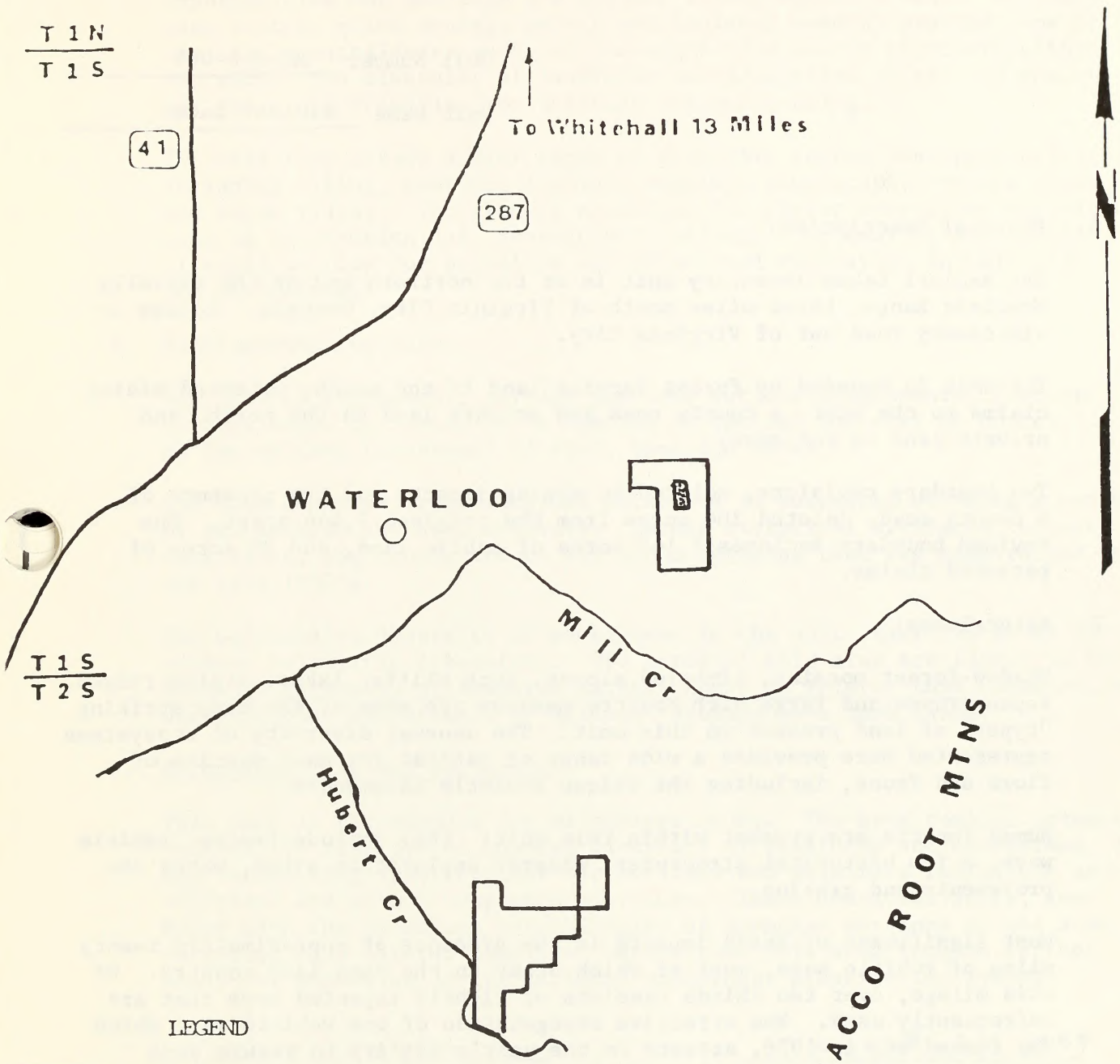
Approval

[signature] — 8/31/79

District Manager — Date

TOBACCO ROOT TACK-ONS WEST

MT-076-063



R 5 | R 4

Wilderness Characteristics

Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-069

Unit Name Axolotl Lakes

1. Physical Description:

The Axolotl Lakes inventory unit is at the northern end of the Gravelly Mountain Range, three miles south of Virginia City, Montana. Access is via county road out of Virginia City.

The unit is bounded by Forest Service land to the south, patented mining claims to the west, a county road and private land to the north, and private land to the east.

Two boundary revisions, related to mining impacts and the presence of a county road, deleted 304 acres from the original 7,444 acres. The revised boundary encloses 7,140 acres of public land, and 90 acres of patented claims.

2. Naturalness:

Meadow-forest mosaics, timbered slopes, rock cliffs, lakes, alpine ridges, aspen groves and large high country meadows are some of the many striking "types" of land present in this unit. The unusual diversity of ecosystems represented here provides a wide range of habitat for many species of flora and fauna, including the unique Axolotle Salamander.

Human impacts are present within this unit; they include fences, vehicle ways, a few historical structures, mineral exploration sites, water improvements and grazing.

Most significant of these impacts is the presence of approximately twenty miles of vehicle ways, most of which occur in the open lake country. Of this milage, over two thirds consists of lightly impacted ways that are infrequently used. The effective revegetation of one vehicle way, which was fenced off in 1976, attests to the unit's ability to return such impacted areas to a natural condition in a relatively short time after use is discontinued.

The outstanding degree of topographic and vegetative diversity of this unit acts to reinforce the sense of naturalness within the area and diminish the significance of man's impacts. As a result the area appears to be primarily affected by the forces of nature.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Opportunities for solitude are present throughout this unit. Secluded game trails, quiet vantage points and isolated meadows provide some of the many possibilities to avoid the sights and sounds of others within the area. The diversity of landforms and vegetation is the key reason why these opportunities for solitude are outstanding.

The area also offers a wide range of primitive recreation opportunities, including hiking, hunting, fishing, camping, photography, nature study and horse riding. The area is excellent for winter recreation activities such as snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. The quality and quantity of opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation in this unit are outstanding.

4. Supplemental Features:

The Axolotl salamander, perhaps the most curious supplemental feature of this area, is listed as "a species of special interest or concern", by the Montana Department of Fish, Game and Parks.

The area contains archaeological sites and is suspected of being a center of prehistoric cultural activity. Recent historical artifacts include rock kilns, log cabins and an old stone building that was constructed in the late 1800's.

The outstanding diversity of ecosystems in the unit qualifiy it as an ideal outdoor scientific laboratory. 960 acres of this area are listed in the National Directory of Research Natural Areas on Federal Land. However, no designations, withdrawals or official actions have been taken.

5. Recommendations and Rationale:

This unit is recommended for wilderness study. The area remains primarily natural, it displays an unusual diversity of landforms and ecosystems, it has outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation and many different and unique supplemental values. These characteristics, combined with the excellent possibilities of impacted portions of the area returning to a natural condition merits that this area receive further study for inclusion in the national wilderness preservation system.

John Merven — August 28, 1979

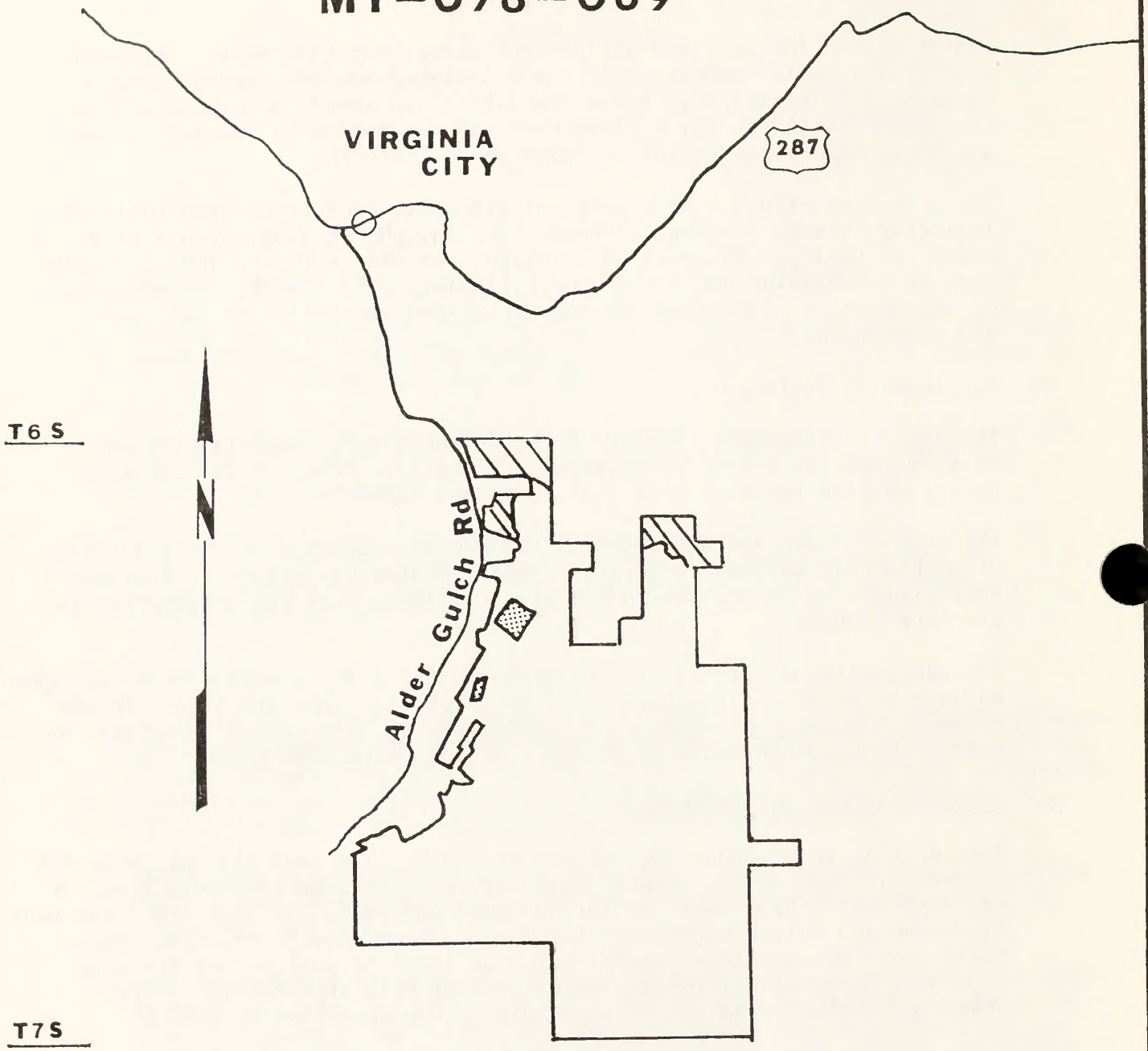
Philip L. Guzman — AUGUST 28, 1979

Staff Signatures — Dates

Approval

District Manager — 8/31/79 Date

AXOLOTL LAKES
MT-076-069



LEGEND

Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).

Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (non recommended as a W.S.A.).

Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).

U.S. Highway

96

R 3 W | R 2 W

Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-070

Unit Name Sweetwater

1. Physical Description:

The Sweetwater Inventory Unit is located seven miles southwest of Ruby Reservoir and north of Sweetwater Creek. Public access is available by turning off highway 287 in Alder and traveling south on the Sweetwater Road for approximately eighteen miles. The unit's boundaries are almost entirely formed by private land except in a small portion of the east, northeast, and southwest where state land forms the boundary.

Within the orginal boundaries there are 7,750 acres of public land and two separate parcels of private land totaling 200 acres. A minor boundary adjustment was made during the inventory stage to exclude a road that traverses the unit for a short distance. This adjustment deletes only one acre of land and therefore the final size of the is unit is 7,749 acres of public land.

2. Naturalness:

The Sweetwater Inventory Unit is predominately open sagebrush slopes with a few isolated timber stands. There is a central plateau with numerous gently sloping drainages on the western and southwestern side whereas the northern and eastern slopes tend to be steeper.

Imprints of man's work are present within the unit and some were found that significantly deter from the area's naturalness. Numerous vehicle ways, some of which are improved, traverse over eighteen miles of the unit. The entire unit is covered by grazing allotments and contains associated range improvements. Many signs of overgrazing exist. The cumulative effects from the impacts associated with the numerous vehicle ways and grazing are significantly noticeable and detract from the apparent naturalness of the unit.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The Sweetwater Inventory Unit does provide some opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation, but none of these opportunities are outstanding. Vegetative screening is virtually absent in all but 25% of the unit but the varied terrain does provide fairly good topographic screening. The primary recreational opportunities are associated with the various species of wildlife that inhabit the area. These include wildlife observation, nature study, bird watching, photography, and some big game hunting.

4. Supplemental Values:

The Sweetwater Inventory Unit contains wildlife species of ecological value, rock outcroppings of geological value, and a prehistoric chert quarry of anthropological value.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

It is recommended that the Sweetwater Inventory Unit be dropped from further wilderness study. Although the unit does contain 7,749 acres of public land and has supplemental values, it does not appear to have been primarily affected by the forces of nature nor does it have outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

Andrea Sharon — 8/28/79

Richard E. Ward — 8/25/79

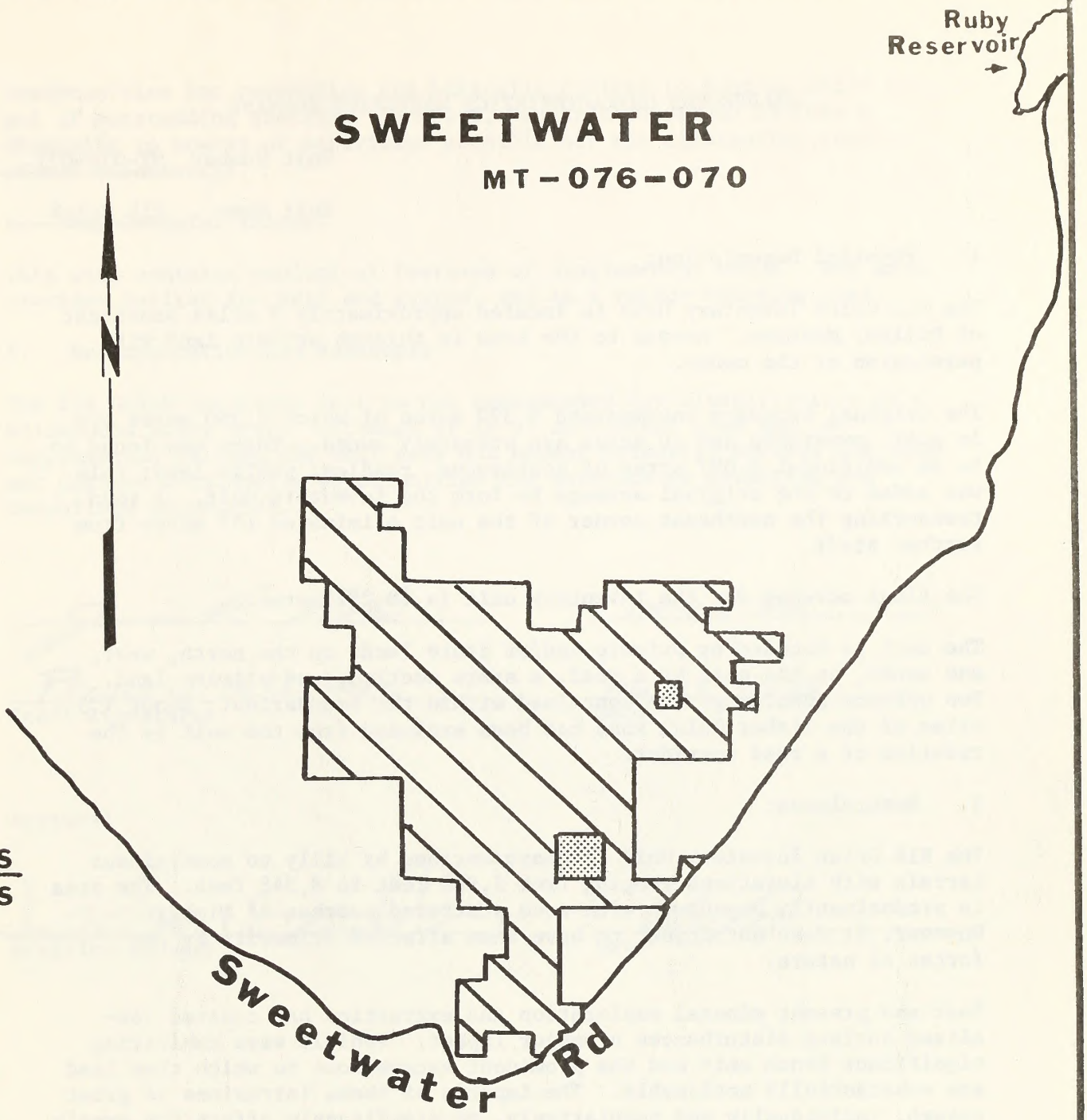
Staff Signatures — Date

Approval

District Manager — Date 8/31/79

SWEETWATER

MT-076-070



LEGEND

Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.)

Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).

R 6 W | R 5 W

Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-071

Unit Name Elk Gulch

1. Physical Description:

The Elk Gulch Inventory Unit is located approximately 9 miles southeast of Dillon, Montana. Access to the area is through private land with permission of the owner.

The original boundary encompassed 8,390 acres of which 8,350 acres are in pubic ownership and 40 acres are privately owned. There was found to be an additional 2,097 acres of contiguous, roadless public land; this was added to the original acreage to form the inventory unit. A road transecting the northeast corner of the unit eliminated 155 acres from further study.

The final acreage for the inventory unit is 10,292 acres.

The unit is bounded by private and/or state lands on the north, west, and south, on the east by a road, a state section, and private land. Two private inholdings are contained within the boundaries. About 1.5 miles of the Timber Gulch Road has been excluded from the unit by the creation of a road corridor.

2. Naturalness:

The Elk Gulch Inventory Unit is characterized by hilly to mountainous terrain with elevations ranging from 5,980 feet to 8,348 feet. The area is predominantly sagebrush with some scattered patches of timber. However, it does not appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

Past and present mineral exploration and extraction has created localized surface disturbances of major impact. Vehicle ways exhibiting significant bench cuts and the prominent excavations to which they lead are substantially noticeable. The impacts of these intrusions is great enough, individually and cumulatively, to signficantly affect the area's apparent naturalness.

In addition, there are several minor impacts: vehicle ways, fences, spring developments, and evidence of a pole harvest. The overall impression is of an area that has been scarred by man's activities.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The ELk Gulch Inventory Unit does not provide outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. The topographic configuration, preponderance of sagebrush cover, and distribution of man-made intrusions are not conducive to the realization of solitude.

Opportunities for recreation are basically limited to hunting which is not of outstanding quality. In short, the area possesses neither a diversity in number of activities possible nor the outstanding quality of one opportunity.

4. Supplemental Values:

This unit contains ecological features of supplemental value. The area provides habitat for deer and grouse, and is a raptor breeding area.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

The Elk Gulch Inventory Unit is not recommended for classification as a Wilderness Study Area. Although it is of sufficient size and has supplemental values, the unit does not appear primarily natural and does not possess outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

James R. Foote — 08-29-79

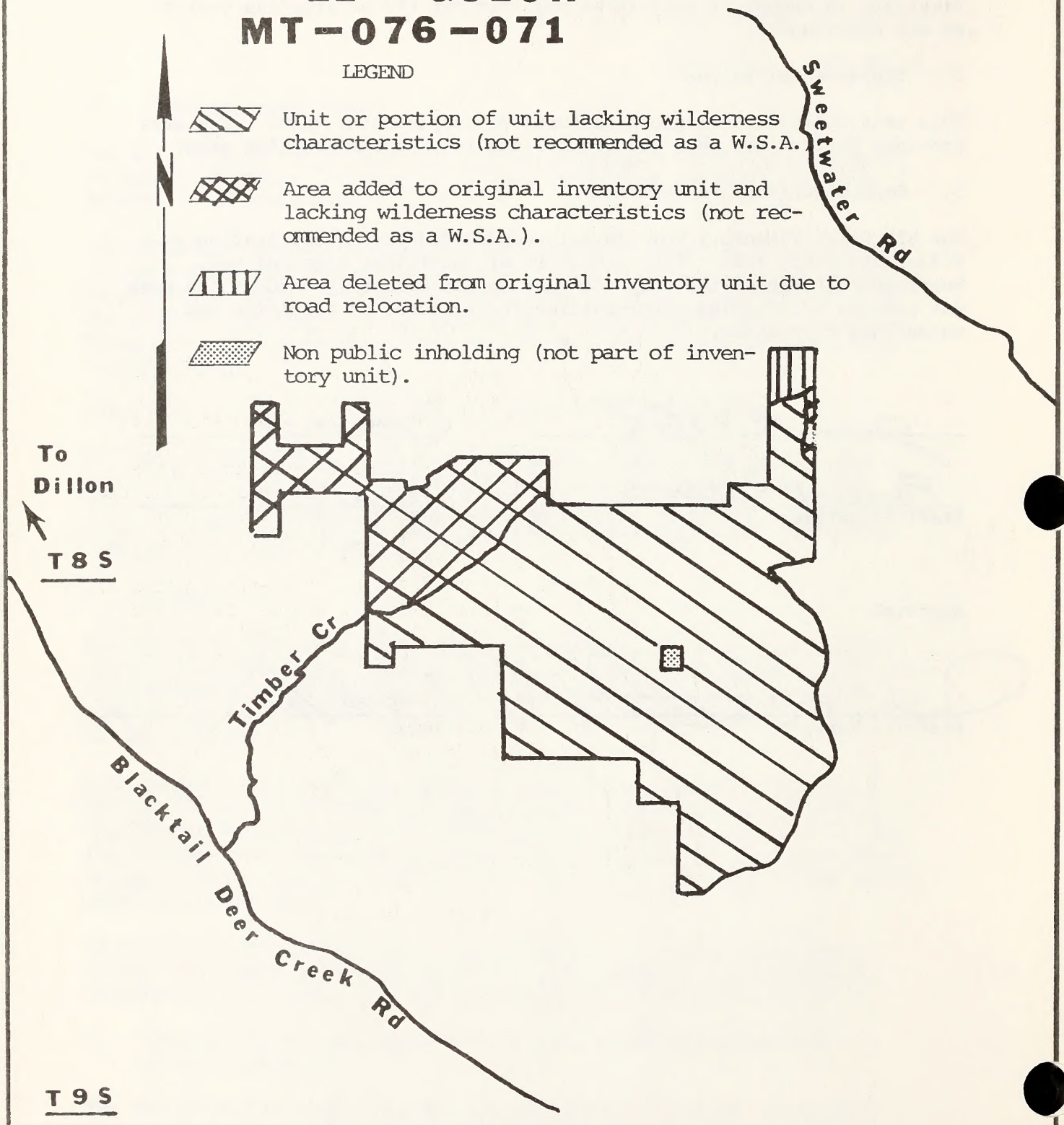
Phoebe J. Patterson — Aug 29, 1979

Staff Signatures — Date

Approval

District Manager — 8/31/79 Date

ELK GULCH
MT-076-071


LEGEND
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
Area added to original inventory unit and lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
Area deleted from original inventory unit due to road relocation.
Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
N
Sweetwater Rd
To Dillon
T 8 S
Timber Cr
Blacktail Deer Creek Rd
T 9 S
R 8 W
R 7 W
Scale 1: 100,000

IN REPLY REFER TO

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
District Office
Box 308
Butte MT 59701

September 10, 1979

Memorandum

To: State Director, Montana

From: District Manager, Butte

Subject: Step 4, Intensive Inventory, Wilderness Review

Units MT-075-073 and MT-075-074 were originally recommended to be dropped at the initial inventory stage because they were thought to be contiguous to a Forest Service RARE II area that was recommended for non wilderness. During the public comment period, members of the public pointed out that according to the Forest Service's RARE II final ES map, these units were contiguous to areas recommended for further planning. For this reason, the initial inventory decision was changed and these units were intensively inventoried. At this time, they were combined with units MT-075-063 and MT-075-064, which are contiguous to the same RARE II area, according to the RARE II final ES map. Subsequent to this decision, Beaverhead National Forest officials were contacted to ascertain the exact boundaries of the RARE II area. These officials indicated that the RARE II final ES map was incorrect, and that units MT-075-073 and MT-075-074 were contiguous to RARE II area 1-014 which was recommended for non wilderness, and not to area B1-013 which was recommended for further planning. For this reason units MT-075-073 and MT-075-074 were dropped from further study and not included in the intensive inventory narrative or summary.

Jack A. McIntosh
District Manager

CONSERVE AMERICA'S ENERGY

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IN REPLY REFER TO:

8500

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
District Office
Box 308
Butte, MT 59701

Memorandum

To: State Director, Montana

From: District Manager, Butte

Subject: Step 4, Intensive Inventory, Butte

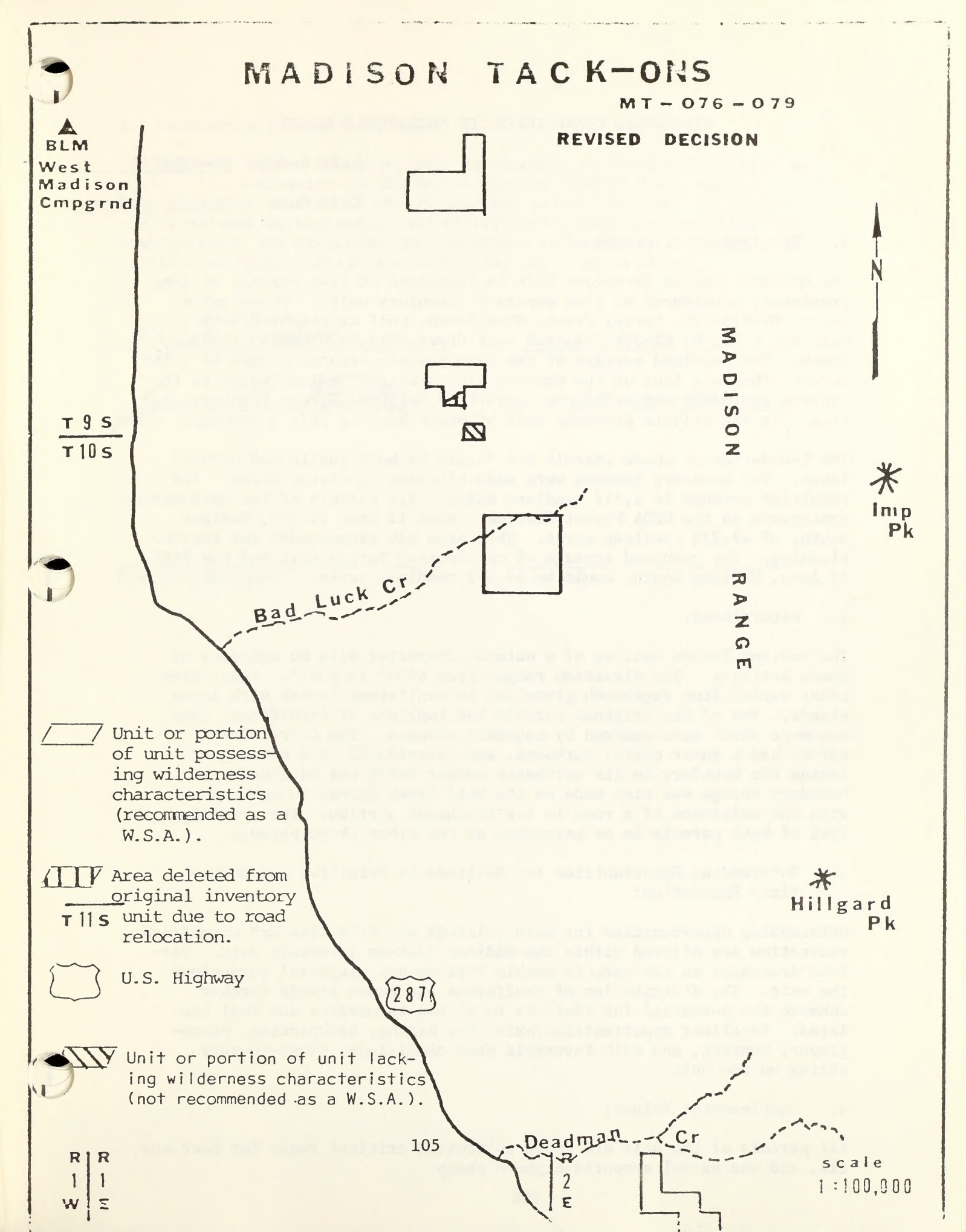
Initially, all areas adjacent to the Forest Service RARE II areas were recommended for further study pending the results of the Forest Service studies of adjoining lands per State Office instructions. Late instructions were received stating each area must stand on its own merits. Consequently, the 40-acre tract, since it is lacking outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation, was dropped from further study.

Jack A. McIntosh
District Manager

MADISON TACK-ONS

MT-076-079

REVISED DECISION



WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-079

Unit Name Madison Tack-on

1. Physical Description:

The Madison Tack-on Inventory Unit is comprised of five parcels of land previously considered as five separate inventory units. Those units were: MT-076-079, Corral Creek; MT-076-080, Wolf Creek; MT-076-081, Wolf Creek South; MT-076-082, Bad Luck Creek; and MT-076-084, Trout Creek. The combined acreage of the five parcels creates a unit of 1,560 acres. The unit lies on the western slopes of the Madison Range in the extreme southeast corner of the Beaverhead National Forest boundary. Access is via private property east of State Highway 287.

The boundaries of these parcels are formed by both public and private lands. Two boundary changes were made eliminating eleven acres. The resulting acreage is 1,549 roadless acres. All parcels of the unit are contiguous to the USDA Forest Service. RARE II Area S1-549, Madison South, of 42,959 roadless acres. This area was recommended for further planning. The combined acreage of the Madison Tackon unit and the RARE II Area, Madison South, would be 44,479 roadless acres.

2. Naturalness:

The Madison Tackon unit is of a natural character with no evidence of human activity. The elevation ranges from 6600' to 8947'. Vegetative cover varies from sagebrush grassland to coniferous forest with aspen stands. Two of the original parcels had imprints of significant consequence which were removed by boundary changes. The Corral Creek parcel had a guest cabin, outhouse, and dilapidated, old cabin just inside the boundary in its northeast corner which was excluded. A boundary change was also made on the Wolf Creek parcel to correspond with the existence of a road in its southeast portion. The remaining land of both parcels is as untouched as the other three parcels.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are offered within the Madison Tack-on Inventory Unit. Various drainages on the parcels enable visitor use dispersal throughout the unit. The distribution of coniferous and aspen stands further enhance the potential for visitors to screen themselves and feel isolated. Excellent opportunities exist for hiking, backpacking, photography, hunting, and with favorable snow conditions, cross-country skiing on the unit.

4. Supplemental Values:

All parcels of the unit are known to provide critical range for deer and elk, and one parcel supports bighorn sheep.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

The Madison Tack-on Inventory Unit is recommended for further study as a WSA. Its contiguity to the Forest Service RARE II Area, Madison South, creates an area of 44,479 roadless acres. The unit is essentially natural in character, and offers outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The unit also provides critical habitat for deer, elk, and bighorn sheep.

Phoebe J. Patterson — 08-31-79

James R Foote — 08-31-79

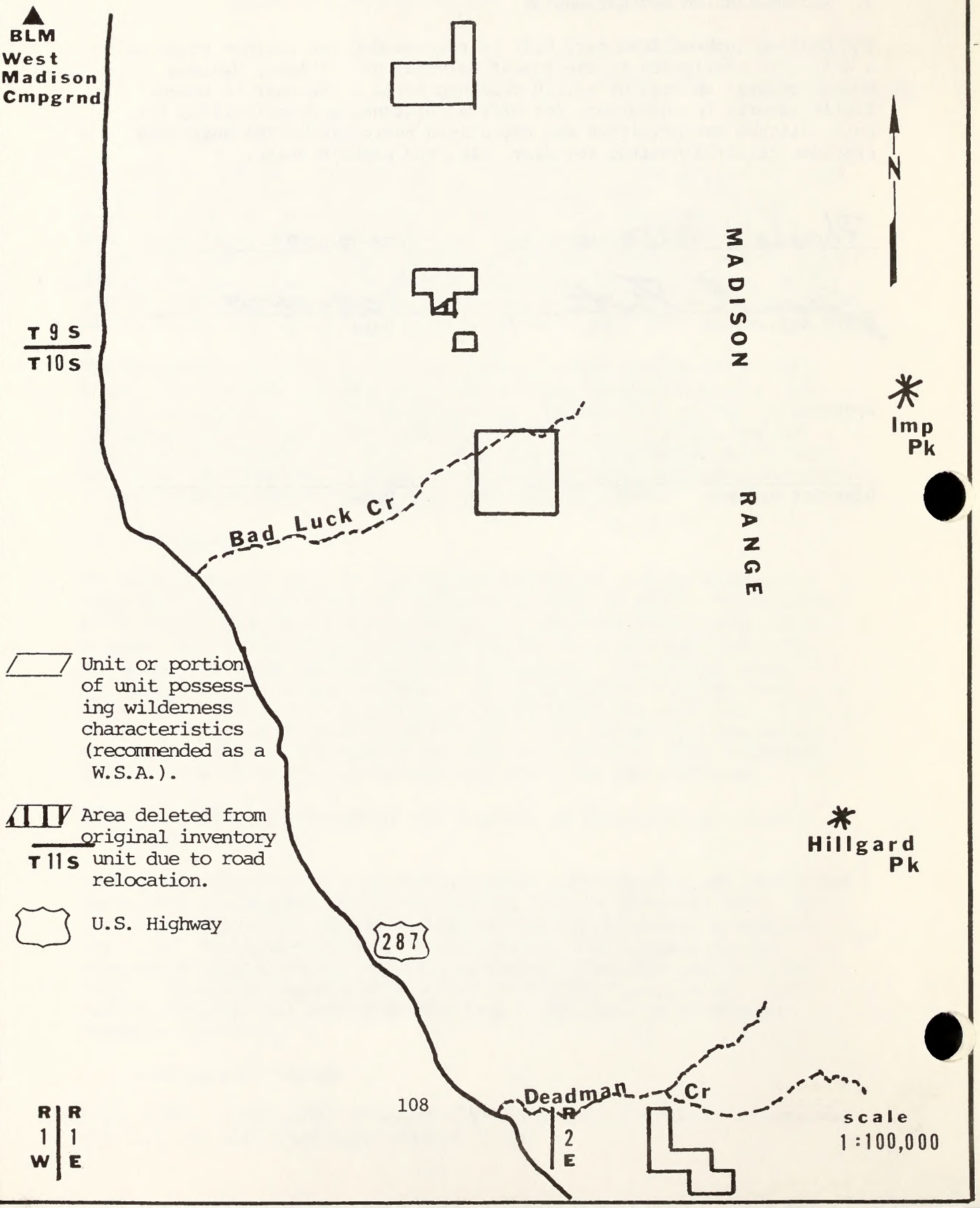
Staff Signatures — Date

Approval

District Manager — Date

MADISON TACKONS

MT-076-079



IN REPLY REFER TO

8500

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
District Office
Box 308
Butte MT 59701

August 31, 1979

Memorandum

To: State Director, Montana

From: District Manager, Butte

Subject: Step 4, Intensive Inventory, Wilderness Review

Unit 102, Blind Horse Creek, is recommended as a proposed Wilderness Study Area (WSA). I would like to call to your attention the fact that the unit is adjacent to an extensive area of Forest Service roadless land. This roadless area, A-1-485 (partial), Bear-Marshall-Scapegoat-Swan, was dropped in the final EIS for RARE II. Some determination should be made during the study phase as to whether and how much Forest Service land should also be studied.

Jack A. McIntosh
District Manager

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WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-102

Unit Name Blind Horse Creek

1. Physical Description:

The Blind Horse Creek Inventory Unit encompasses an area of 5,080, of which 4,927 acres are in public ownership. The unit is bordered to the west by public lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service, and to the north, east, and south by private lands. The area is located on the eastern front of the Rocky Mountains, 25 miles NE of Choteau, Montana. Public access into the area is via gravel roads up the Chicken Coulee and Clark Fork Muddy Creek drainages.

2. Naturalness:

The Blind Horse Creek Inventory Unit appears to be primarily in its natural state. The elevations range from 5,100' to 7,000' and the unit is transected by 3 drainages. The vegetative cover is dense in some patches, but opens in other areas to a grassland meadow. There are some imprints of human activity within the unit. These are vehicular ways, fences, and a water diversion ditch. None of the impacts, either singly or collectively, significantly detract from the unit's apparent naturalness.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are outstanding. The three drainages enable visitor use dispersal. The distribution of varied vegetation adds additional screening, promoting excellent opportunities for solitude. The unit's scenery and wildlife make sightseeing, photography, and nature study of exceptional quality. Additionally, excellent opportunities exist for backpacking and hiking.

4. Supplemental Values:

The Blind Horse Creek Unit is known to be a critical habitat for many rare species of wildlife. These include grizzly and black bear, wolves, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, bald and golden eagles, and other big game and non-game species. A second supplemental value is the unit's outstanding scenery.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

Blind Horse Creek is recommended for further study as a WSA. It is apparently natural in character, and offers outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The area also provides critical habitat for many rare, endangered, or threatened species. Although the unit's acreage is less than the required 5,000, it is being considered due to strong public support.

Phoebe J. Patterson — Aug. 29, 1979

[illegible] — August 29 1979

Staff Signatures — Date

Approval

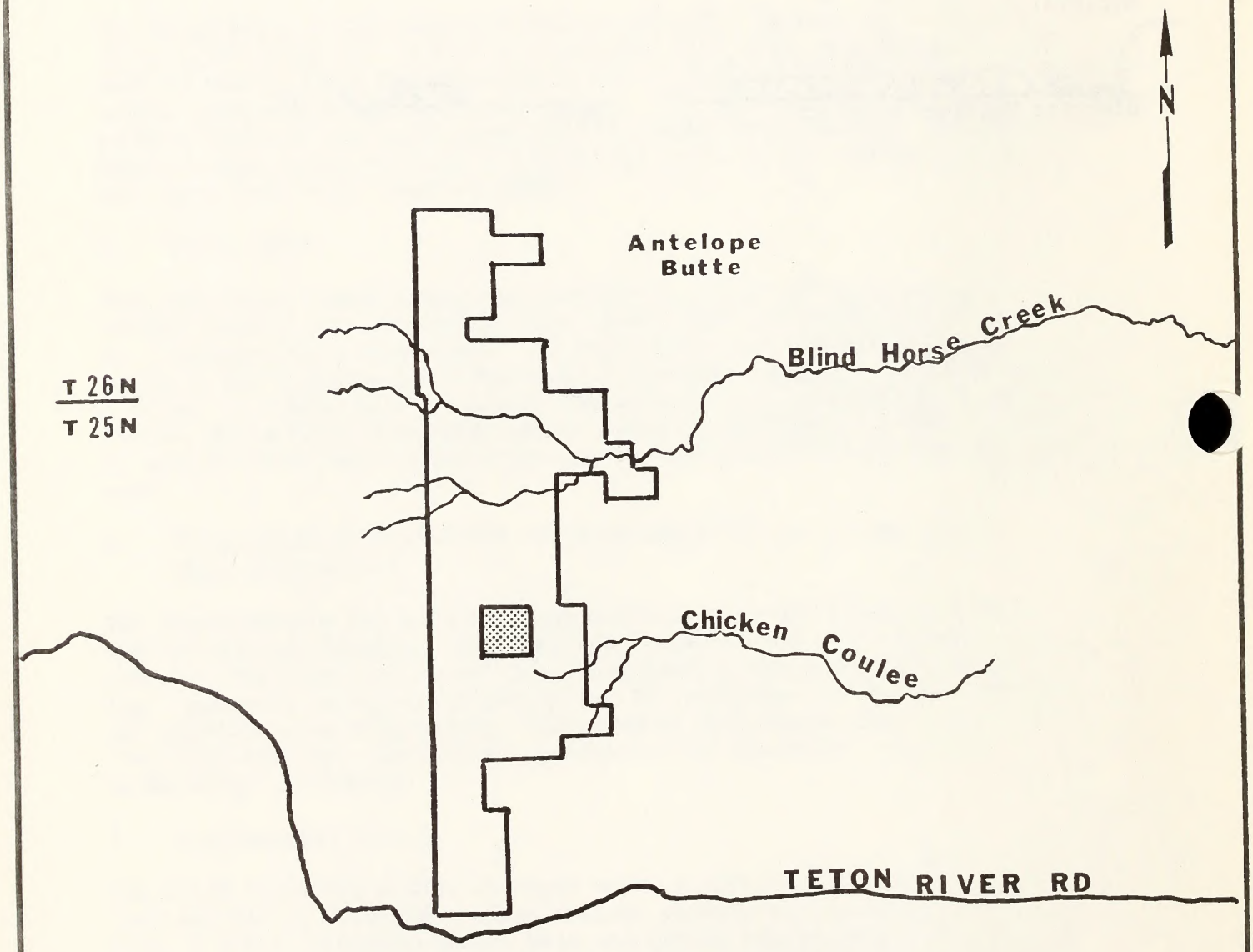
[illegible]

District Manager — 8/31/79

Date

BLIND HORSE CREEK

MT-075-102



Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).

Non public inholding
(non part of inventory unit).

R 9 W | R 8 W

112

R 7 W

Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-105

Unit Name Chute Mountain

1. Physical Description:

The Chute Mountain Inventory Unit is located in the east front of the Rocky Mountains approximately twenty-four miles west of Choteau, Montana. Access is available on the west through the Lewis and Clark National Forest or on the east through private land with permission of the owner.

The unit consists of 3,085 acres of public land. Boundaries on the north, east, and south are formed by private land and on the west by National forest land. The western boundary is contiguous with the Forest Service RARE II area P1-485 (Bear Marshall Scopegoat Swan), 26,068 acres.

2. Naturalness:

The Chute Mountain Inventory Unit is part of the Rocky Mountain Front, a unique area where the mountains rise abruptly from the plains. Dominate features within the unit are the steep eastern slopes of Chute Mountain and the North Fork of Deep Creek which forms a steep sided canyon through the southwest portion of the unit. The majority of the unit is forested with Douglas fir and Limber Pine and there are some interspersed rock outcroppings and open grass areas.

The unit appears to be in a natural condition and to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. There are some minor impacts which include one vehicle way and the remains of some linear clearings on the east slope of Chute Mountain that were utilized as log chutes during the early 1900's. These impacts show signs of revegetation and do not significantly deter from the apparent naturalness of the unit.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The Chute Mountain Inventory Unit by itself and also in conjunction with the contiguous RARE II area provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The forested areas and varied terrain found throughout the unit provide a high degree of vegetative or a topographic screening which makes it very easy to find a secluded spot.

The wide range of wildlife species that inhabit the unit and vicinity provide outstanding opportunities for hunting, wildlife observation and bird watching. The combination of the interesting geologic and zoologic features provide outstanding opportunities for nature study and photography, and also enhance the day hiking and backpacking opportunities. The inventory unit offers both a variety of recreational opportunities as well as several high quality ones.

4. Supplemental Values:

The unique geology of the Rocky Mountain Front is of significant scientific and scenic value. The variety of wildlife that inhabit the unit and contiguous RARE II area including the rare and endangered grizzly bear and wolf, are of significant ecological value. Of historic value are the log chutes located on the eastern slope of Chute Mountain that were constructed in the early 1900's.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

It is recommended that the Chute Mountain Inventory Unit received further wilderness study. When considered in conjunction with the contiguous RARE II area, the unit is of sufficient size; appears to have been primarily affected by the forces of nature; has outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation; and has supplemental values.

Andrea Sharon — 08/28/79

Stephen P. Gotta — 08-31-79

Staff Signatures — Date

Approval

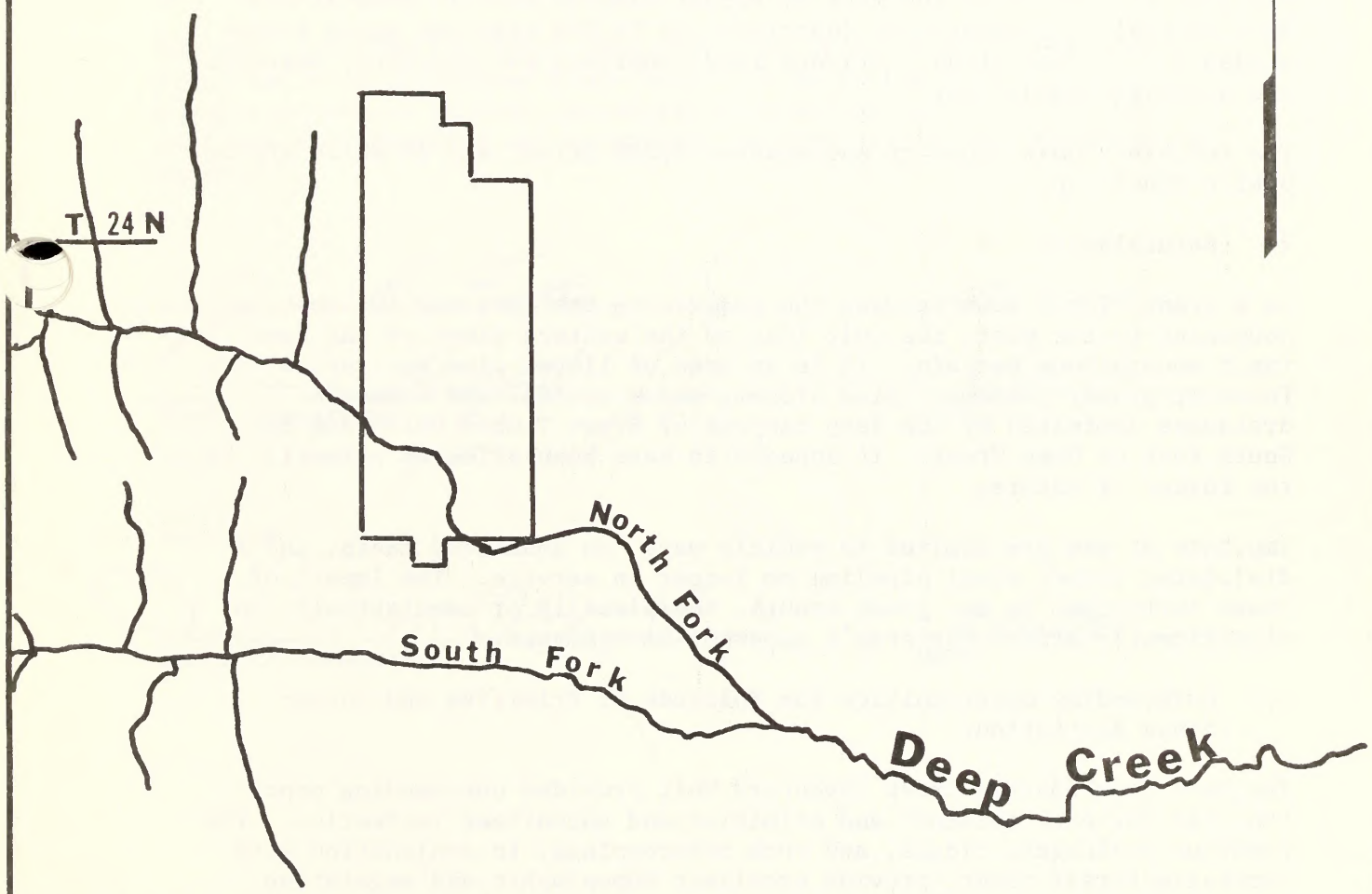
District Manager — Date 8/31/79

CHUTE MOUNTAIN

MT- 75-105

LEGEND

Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).



WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-106

Unit Name Deep Creek/ Battle Creek

1. Physical Description:

The Deep Creek/Battle Creek Inventory Unit is located approximately 22 miles west-southwest of Choteau, Montana. Access from the east is through private land with permission of the owner or from the west through the Lewis and Clark National Forest.

The unit is bounded on the west by Forest Service RARE II area A1-485, Bear-Marshall-Scapegoat-Swan (partial), of 14,250 roadless acres recommended for further study. Private land comprises the northern, eastern, and southern boundaries.

The inventory unit boundary encompasses 3,086 acres, all of which are in public ownership.

2. Naturalness:

As a transitional zone between the prairie to the east and the Rocky Mountains to the west, the unit lies on the eastern slope of the dominant mountainous terrain. It is an area of limber pine and spruce forests, grassy meadows, talus slopes, sheer cliffs, and numerous drainages dominated by the deep canyons of Green Timber Gulch and the South Fork of Deep Creek. It appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

Imprints of man are limited to vehicle ways, an abandoned cabin, and a disjointed 2-inch steel pipeline no longer in service. The impact of these intrusions is not great enough, individually or cumulatively, to significantly affect the area's apparent naturalness.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The Deep Creek/Battle Creek Inventory Unit provides outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The numerous drainages, ridges, and rock outcroppings, in conjunction with extensive forest cover, provide excellent topographic and vegetative screening, separating visitors from one another. In conjunction with the contiguous RARE II area A1-485, opportunities for solitude are even greater.

Recreation opportunities are outstanding as well. As a habitat for many game species, hunting opportunities are excellent as are the opportunities for fishing in the South Fork of Deep Creek. Other recreational opportunities include hiking, backpacking, nature study, and photography. The area possesses both a diversity in number of activities

possible and the outstanding quality of several opportunities. In conjunction with the contiguous RARE II area A1-485, opportunities for recreation increase substantially.

4. Supplemental Values:

The inventory unit contains supplemental values in the form of unique geological and ecological features. The landscape exhibits visible evidence of the geologic history associated with the uplifting of the Rocky Mountains.

The area provides habitat for the rare and endangered grizzly bear and wolf as well as numerous game and non-game species.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

The Deep Creek/Battle Creek Inventory Unit is recommended for classification as a Wilderness Study Area. It meets the size criteria, appears primarily natural, possesses outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation, and has supplemental values.

James R. Foote — 08-29-79

Bradley Rickford — 8/29/79

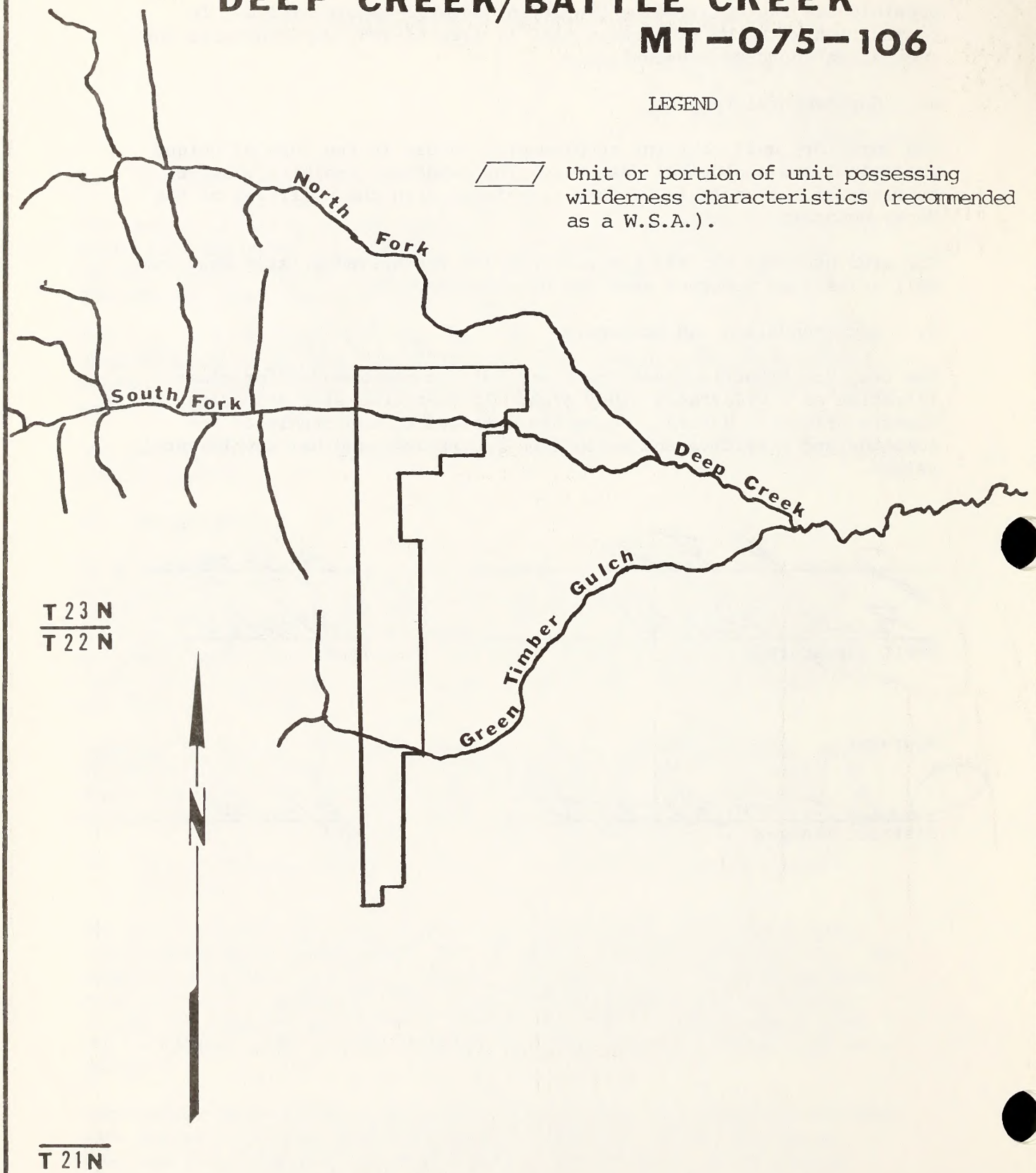
Staff Signatures — Date

Approval

[signature] — 8/31/79

District Manager — Date

DEEP CREEK/BATTLE CREEK
MT-075-106



IN REPLY REFER TO:

8500

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
District Office
Box 308
Butte, MT 59701

Memorandum

To: State Director, Montana

From: District Manager, Butte

Subject: Step 4, Intensive Inventory, Wilderness Review

By itself, this area does not have outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The area contains no topographic or vegetative screening.

Management, therefore, recommends against further wilderness considerations.

Jack A. McIntosh
District Manager

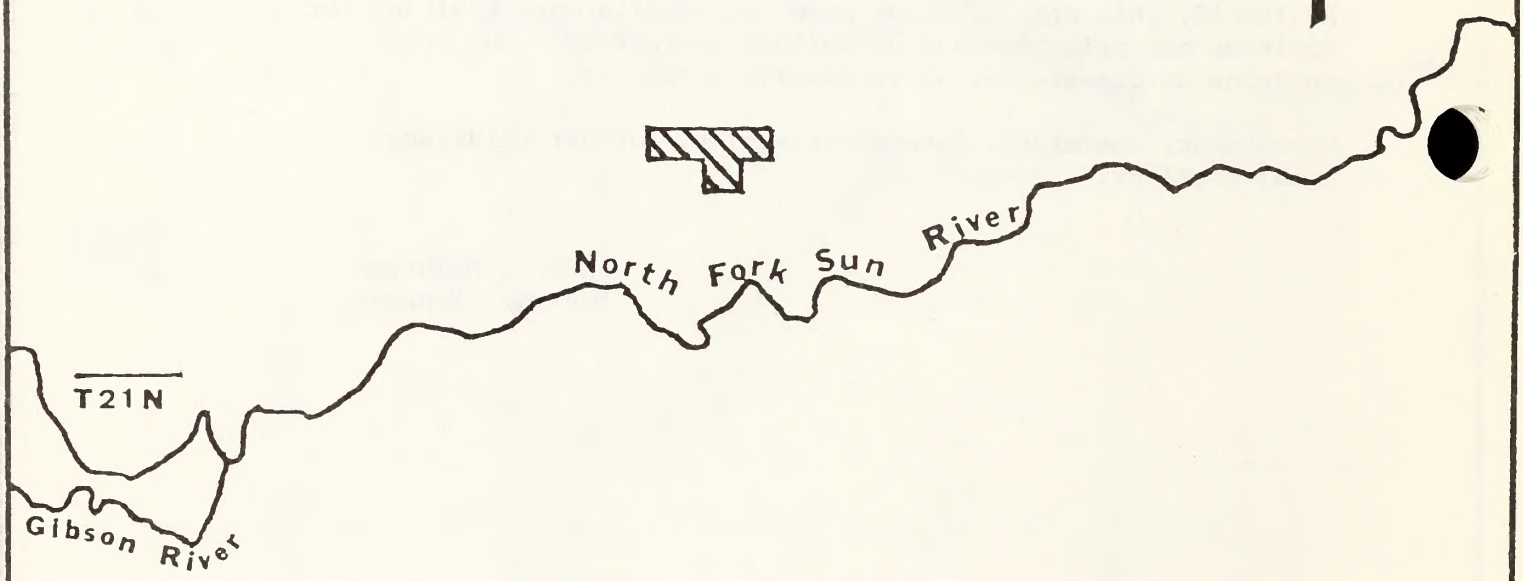
NORTH FORK OF SUN RIVER
MT-075-107

REVISED DECISION

T23N
T22N

LEGEND

Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).



R 3 | R 3

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-107

Unit Name North Fork of Sun River

1. Physical Description:

The North Fork of Sun River Inventory Unit is located approximately twenty four miles southwest of Choteau and eighteen miles northwest of Augusta, Montana. Access from the east is through private lands with permission from the owner or from the west through the Lewis and Clark National Forest.

The unit is bounded on the west by Forest Service RARE II Area A1-485, Bear-Marshall-Scapegoat-Swan, totaling 14,250 roadless acres recommended for further study. The north, south and east boundaries are adjacent to private lands.

The inventory unit boundary encloses 196 acres, all of which are in public ownership. The unit is roughly rectangular, measuring one mile west to east and one quarter to one half mile north to south.

2. Naturalness:

The unit lies within the transitional zone between the prairies to the east and the Rocky Mountains to the west at an elevation of approximately 5,200 feet. It is an area of gentle foothills slopes of grass and scattered limber pines. It contains two converging drainages with four associated ponds, riparian plant communities and aspen stands. It appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

Imprints of man are limited to a quarter mile vehicle way and two associated spurs. This impact is not great enough to significantly affect the apparent naturalness of the area.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreational activities can only be considered outstanding in conjunction with the RARE II Area A1-485. Opportunities are limited within the unit due to its small size and lack of topographic screening. However, when considered as an addition to the adjoining RARE II Area, the solitude is outstanding due to the character and increased area over which visitors could be dispersed.

Recreation activities provided by the unit include big game hunting, horseback riding, nature study and photography. The opportunities along with day hiking and backpacking can only be considered excellent when appraised in conjunction with the RARE II Area.

4. Supplemental Values:

Ecological, scenic and scientific values are available in the unit due to its habitat for the threatened grizzly bear and endangered wolf, populations of game and non-game animals and views of the Rocky Mountains.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

The unit is recommended for classification as a Wilderness Study Area. It meets the size criteria, appears natural, possesses outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation in conjunction with RARE II A1-845 area and has additional supplemental value.

Bradley Rutford — August 29, 1979

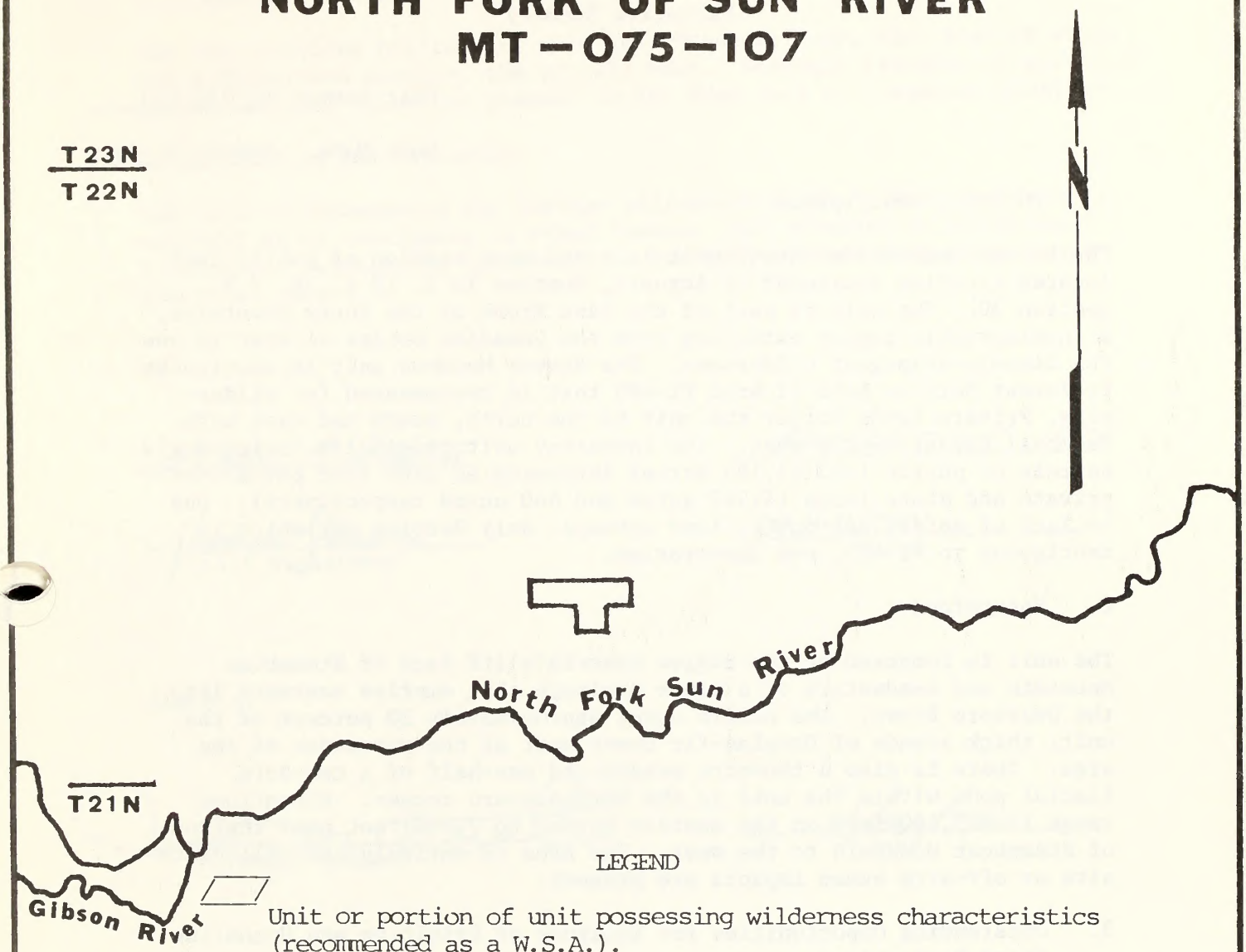
James R. Foote — 08-29-79

Staff Signatures — Date

Approval

District Manager — Date

NORTH FORK OF SUN RIVER
MT-075-107



LEGEND

Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).

R 9 W | R 8 W

Scale 1:100,000

Wilderness Characteristics

Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-110

Unit Name Beaver Meadows

1. Physical Description:

The Beaver Meadows Inventory Unit is a 640 acre section of public land located 15 miles southwest of Augusta, Montana in T. 18 N., R. 7 W., Section 30. The unit is part of the East Front of the Rocky Mountains, a physiographic region extending from the Canadian border to what is now the Lincoln-Scapegoat Wilderness. The Beaver Meadows unit is contiguous to Forest Service RARE II Area F1-485 that is recommended for wilderness. Private lands border the unit to the north, south and east with National Forest to the west. The inventory unit originally included six parcels of public land (2,195 acres) intermingled with four parcels of private and state lands (4,987 acres and 640 acres respectively). Due to lack of sufficient public land acreage, only Section 30, which is contiguous to F1-485, was inventoried.

2. Naturalness:

The unit is composed of the rugged eastern cliff face of Steamboat Mountain and headwaters of a minor drainage that empties eastward into the Dearborn River. The cliffs cover approximately 20 percent of the unit; thick stands of Douglas-fir cover most of the remainder of the area. There is also a two-acre meadow and one-half of a two-acre flacial pond within the unit in the northeastern corner. Elevations range from 5,440 feet on the eastern border to 7,680 feet near the top of Steamboat Mountain to the west. The area is entirely natural; no on-site or off-site human impacts are present.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfinfined Recreation:

Topographic and vegetative screening is abundant within the unit. The scattered small drainages and the almost total coverage of the area by forest, both of which help to isolate the sights and sounds of others in the unit, make the area outstanding in terms of solitude.

Photographic and geological study opportunities are present due to the scenic cliffs and rock outcrops in the western portion of the area. Other primitive recreation opportunities exist, such as hiking, hunting, and camping, but are not outstanding. The unit does not possess any single outstanding primitive recreation opportunity nor is there enough diversity of opportunities for the unit to be considered outstanding.

4. Supplemental Values:

The unit provides habitat for mule and whitetail deer, elk, bighorn sheep and a threatened species, the grizzly bear. Geologic features of scenic and educational value are present on the east face of Steamboat Mountain.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

The unit is recommended for further wilderness study. It is completely natural; it is contiguous to other federal land proposed as wilderness; it provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and it possesses supplemental values.

Stephen F. Gates — August 24, 1979

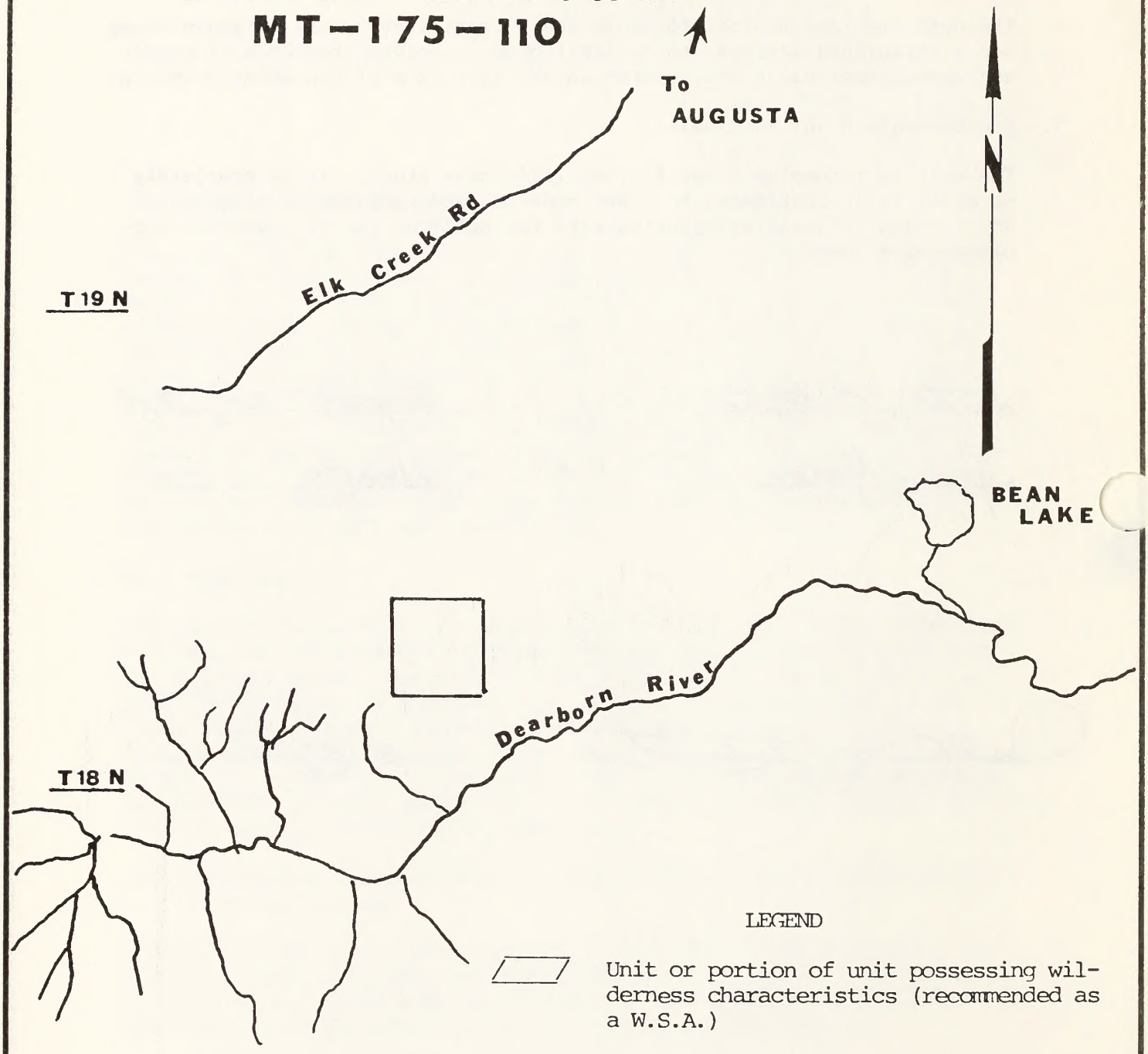
Andrea Sharon — 08/28/79

Staff Signatures — Dates

Approval

District Manager — 8/31/79 Date

BEAVER MEADOWS
MT-175-110



R 8 W | R 7 W

Scale 1:100,000

Wilderness Characteristics Narrative Summary

Unit number: MT-075-114
Unit name: Elkhorn

1. Physical description:

The Elkhorn Inventory Unit is located approximately 6 miles northeast of Boulder, Montana. Public access is via an improved road along Muskrat Creek.

The unit is bounded on the south and east by Forest Service RARE II area A1-620, Bullock Hill (partial), a portion of the congressionally-designated Elkhorn Wilderness Study Area of 85,760 acres. A final recommendation concerning this area is pending. State and private lands comprise the northern and western boundaries. A private inholding is situated in the center of the inventory unit.

The original boundary encompassed 5,655 acres of which 5,478 acres are in public ownership and 177 acres are privately owned. There was found to be an additional 220 acres of contiguous, roadless public land; this was added to the original acreage to form the inventory unit. After the intensive inventory was completed, 2,333 acres were dropped from further study to eliminate about 12 miles of extensively-bladed vehicle ways.

The final acreage for the recommended Wilderness Study Area (WSA) is 3,585 acres.

2. Naturalness:

The proposed WSA is characterized by steep, irregular topography ranging in elevation from 5,000 to 8,000 feet. Except for small, isolated open areas, the landscape is covered by timber. It is an area that appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

There are some minor imprints of man's work: vehicle ways, cabin remains, a constructed foot trail, and remnants of past mining activity. But the impact of these intrusions is not great enough, individually or cumulatively, to significantly affect the area's apparent naturalness.

3. Outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation:

The Elkhorn Inventory Unit offers outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The preponderance of forest cover over the rugged topography is effective in isolating visitors from one another. In conjunction with the contiguous Elkhorn Wilderness Study Area, opportunities for solitude are even greater.

While the natural character of the landscape helps to create outstanding opportunities for solitude, it offers the potential for superb hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing experiences. Other recreational opportunities include deer and upland game bird hunting. The area possesses both a diversity in number of activities possible and the outstanding quality of several opportunities. In conjunction with the contiguous Elkhorn Wilderness Study Area, opportunities for recreation increase substantially.

4. Supplemental values:

The proposed WSA contains supplemental values in the form of ecological and heritage features. The area provides habitat for several game species including elk, moose, deer, and blue and ruffed grouse.

The remains of historic occupations and associated mining activity may be of interest to the visitor.

5. Recommendation and rationale:

The unit is recommended for classification as a Wilderness Study Area with some boundary changes as explained earlier. It meets the size criteria, appears primarily natural, possesses outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation, and has supplemental values.

James R Foote — 08-24-79

John Ciricosta — August 24, 1979

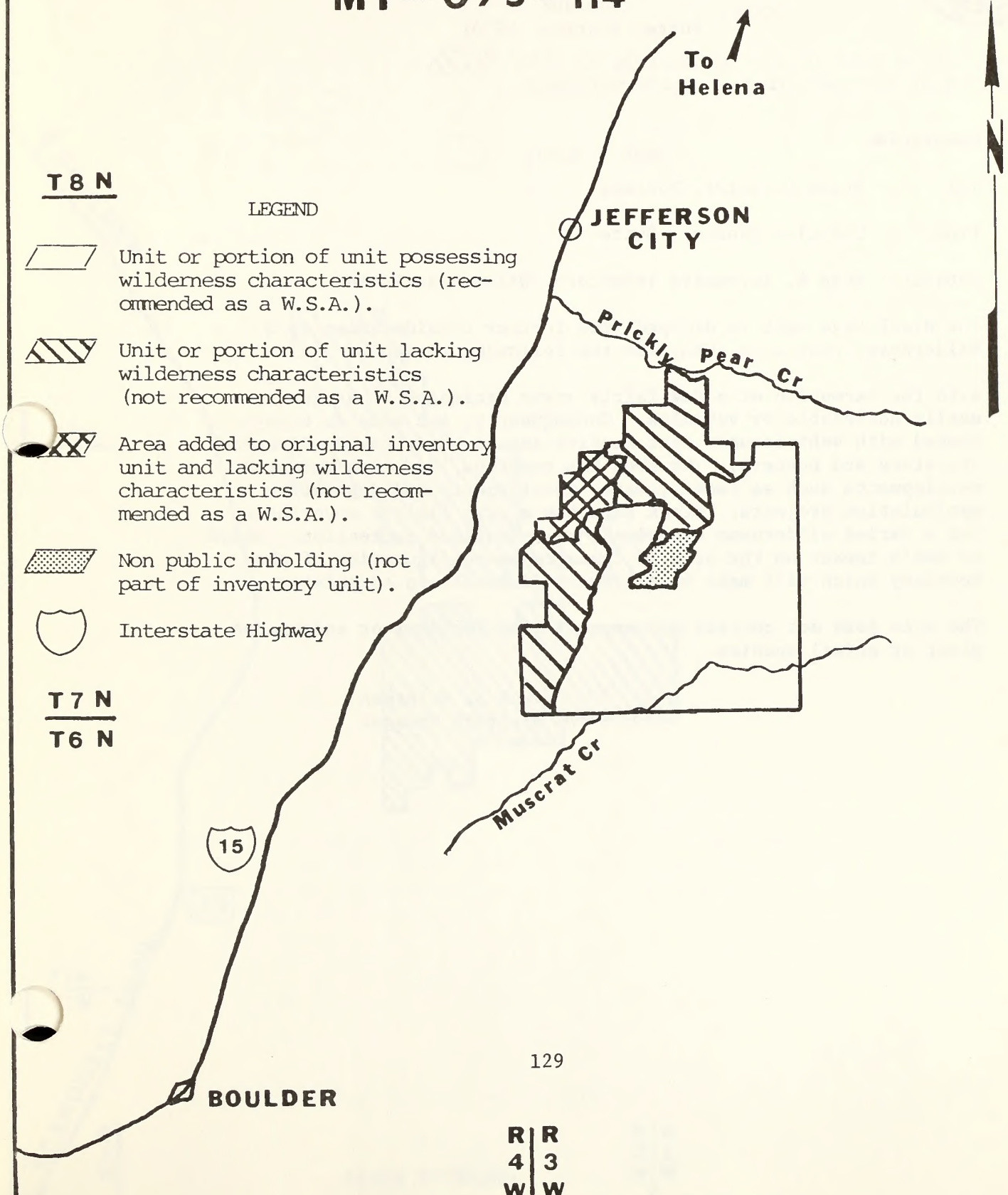
Staff signatures — Date

Approval

[signature] — 8/31/79

District Manager — Date

ELKHORN
MT-075-114


To Helena
N
T8 N
LEGEND
Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
Area added to original inventory unit and lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
Interstate Highway
JEFFERSON CITY
Prickly Pear Cr
T7 N
T6 N
Muscrat Cr
15
BOULDER
R 4 W
R 3 W
Scale 1:100,000

IN REPLY REFER TO:

8500

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
District Office
Box 308
Butte, Montana 59701

Memorandum

To: State Director, Montana

From: District Manager, Butte

Subject: Step 4, Intensive Inventory, Wilderness Review

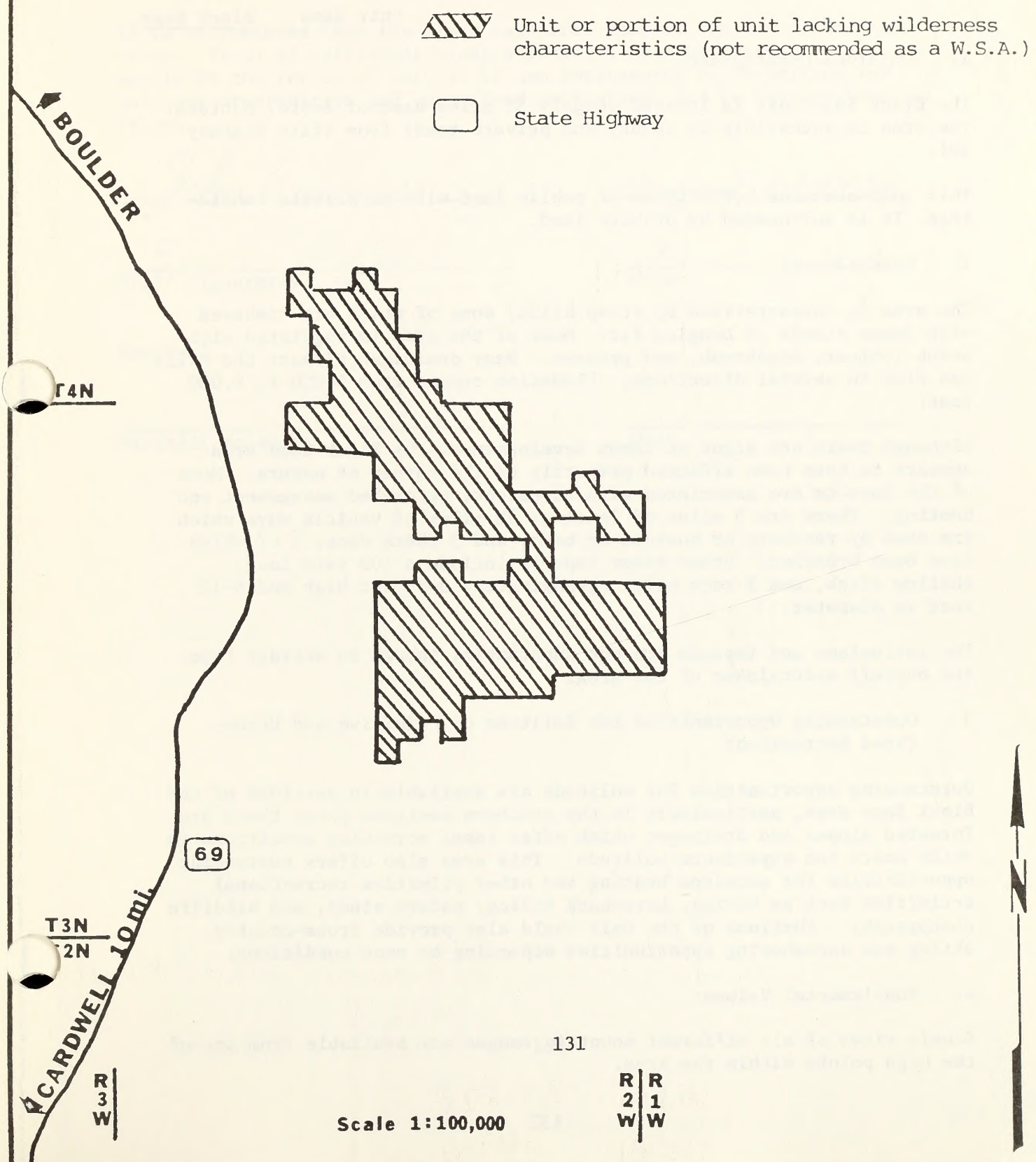
The Black Sage unit is dropped from further consideration as a Wilderness Study Area (WSA) for the following reasons.

With the exception of a few fairly steep drainages, the area is easily accessable by vehicles. Consequently, the area is honeycombed with vehicle ways that receive annual heavy use by livestock operators and hunters. The area has numerous livestock oriented developments such as fences, water developments and vegetative manipulation projects. Black Sage has a very limited opportunity for a varied wilderness experience as unconfined recreation. Added to man's impact on the area is the strange configuration of the boundary which will make it extremely difficult to administer.

The area does not contain any unusual land features or endangered plant or animal species.

Jack A. McIntosh
District Manager

BLACK SAGE
MT-075-115
REVISED DECISION



WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-115

Unit Name Black Sage

1. Physical Description:

The Black Sage Unit is located roughly 32 miles east of Butte, Montana. The area is accessible by county and private roads from state Highway 281.

This unit contains 5,926 acres of public land with no private inholdings. It is surrounded by private land.

2. Naturalness:

The area is characterized by steep hills, some of which are timbered with dense stands of Douglas fir. Most of the area is vegetated with scrub juniper, sagebrush, and grasses. Many drainages dissect the hills and flow in several directions. Elevation ranges from 5,000 to 6,000 feet.

Although there are signs of human developments, the Black Sage area appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. Most of the impacts are associated with livestock, watershed management and hunting. There are 5 miles of fencing; 5½ miles of vehicle ways which are used by ranchers or hunters or both; and 3 check dams, 2 of which have been breached. Other minor impacts include a 100 yard long, shallow ditch, and 3 rock piles approximately 3-5 feet high and 6-12 feet in diameter.

The intrusions and impacts are not substantial enough to detract from the overall naturalness of the area.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are available in portions of the Black Sage area, particularly in the southern sections where there are forested slopes and drainages which offer ideal screening conditions in which users can experience solitude. This area also offers oustanding opportunities for antelope hunting and other primitive recreational activities such as hiking, horseback riding, nature study, and wildlife photography. Portions of the unit could also provide cross-country skiing and snowshoeing opportunities depending on snow conditions.

4. Supplemental Values:

Scenic views of six different mountain ranges are available from any of the high points within the area.

This area also provides habitat for antelope, deer and several species of smaller mammals. Additionally. portion of the Black Sage area provide mule deer winter range.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

It is recommended that the Black Sage area receive further wilderness study. It is of sufficient size; appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature; it has outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation; and it has supplemental values.

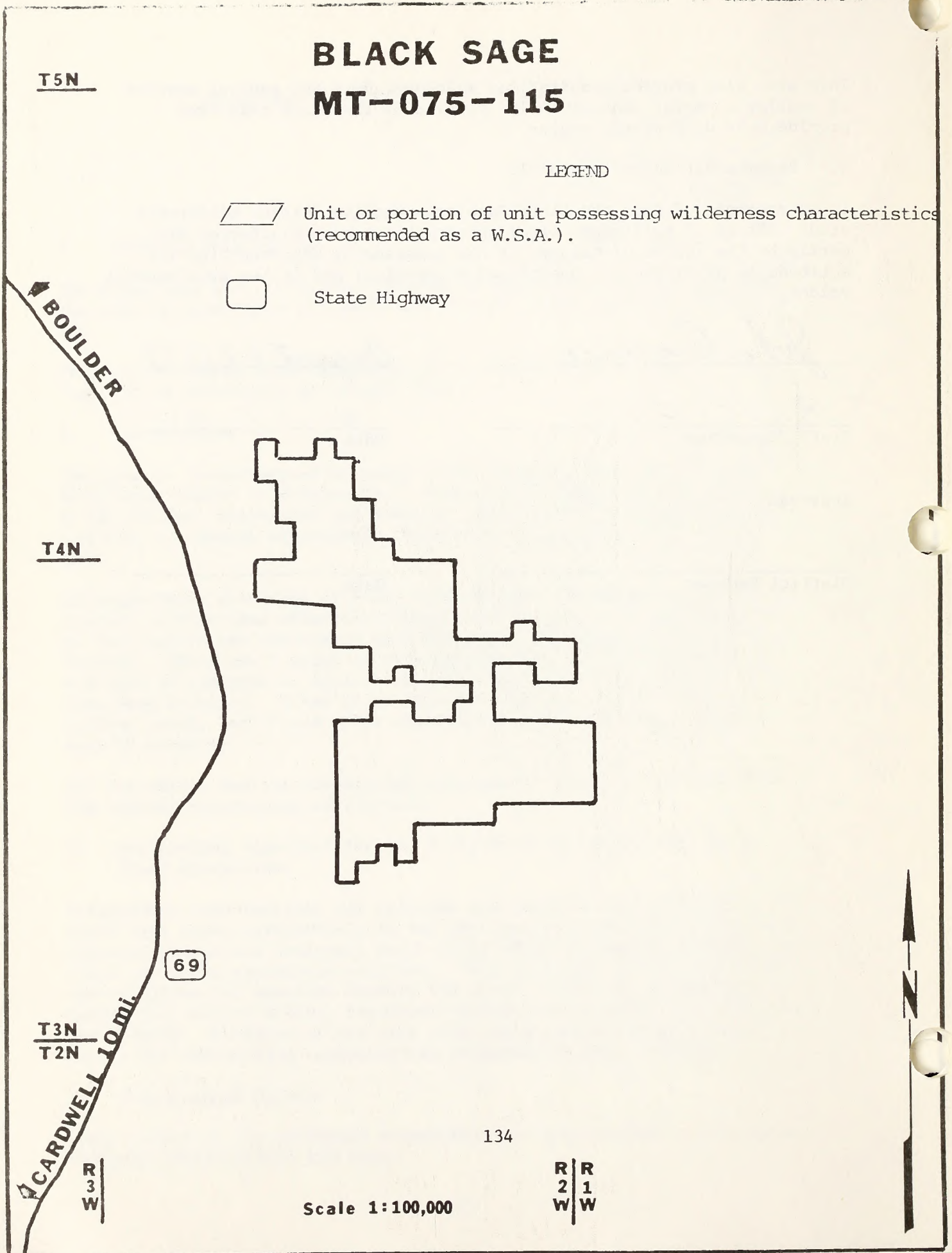
John Clarence — August 29, 1979

Staff Signatures — Date

Approval

District Manager — Date

BLACK SAGE
MT-075-115



Wilderness Characteristics

Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-123

Unit Name Missouri River Island

1. Physical Description:

This unit is an unnamed 22 acre island in the Missouri River that is entirely public land. The island is located 30 miles southwest of Great Falls, Montana in T17N, R1W, Sections 17 and 20.

2. Naturalness:

The unit is comprised of a wide diversity of plant life and topographic features. Shallow backwater coves and inlets, deep offshore pools, cattail marshes, grassy knolls and inland swamps are interspersed with old growth cottonwood stands and willow thickets. Swamps and grass covered areas each comprise approximately 25 percent of the island. Deciduous trees, interspersed among the former, comprise the other 50 percent. The elevation of the island is around 3,360 feet.

No on-site intrusions are present, although impacts to the naturalness of the unit from off-site sources are considerable. Interstate 15 and the old, still used, State Highway 91 are within one-quarter to one-half mile from the unit. Railroad tracks directly parallel the northwestern end of the island and are within one-quarter mile of the unit. Houses are visible across the eastern and western shore. Sight and sound intrusions from these sources significantly affect the apparent naturalness of the island.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Opportunities for solitude are present, but due to the unit's very small size, outstanding opportunities are lacking; other visitors to the island would be easily heard or noticed.

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are rather limited, although the opportunities that are present are of high quality. Rainbow trout fishing in the surrounding water can be considered excellent, especially in the bays and coves along the western shore. The diversity of bird life on the island, due largely to the wide diversity of vegetation, assures that bird watching would be outstanding. Photographic, and botanical and zoological sightseeing opportunities are also present but are not of outstanding quality.

4. Supplemental Values:

The area possesses a wide variety of birdlife that is of educational and possibly scientific value. Cormorants and other waterfowl use the inland old growth cottonwoods and marshes for protected nesting sites. Osprey hunt the waters surrounding the island. A variety of shorebirds, including avocets, roam the shores in search of food. The swamps, grassy areas, willow thickets and old growth cottonwoods support a wide variety of songbirds.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

Due to significant off-site intrusions the island's apparent naturalness is severely impaired. Further wilderness study is not recommended.

Staff Signatures — Dates

08-31-79

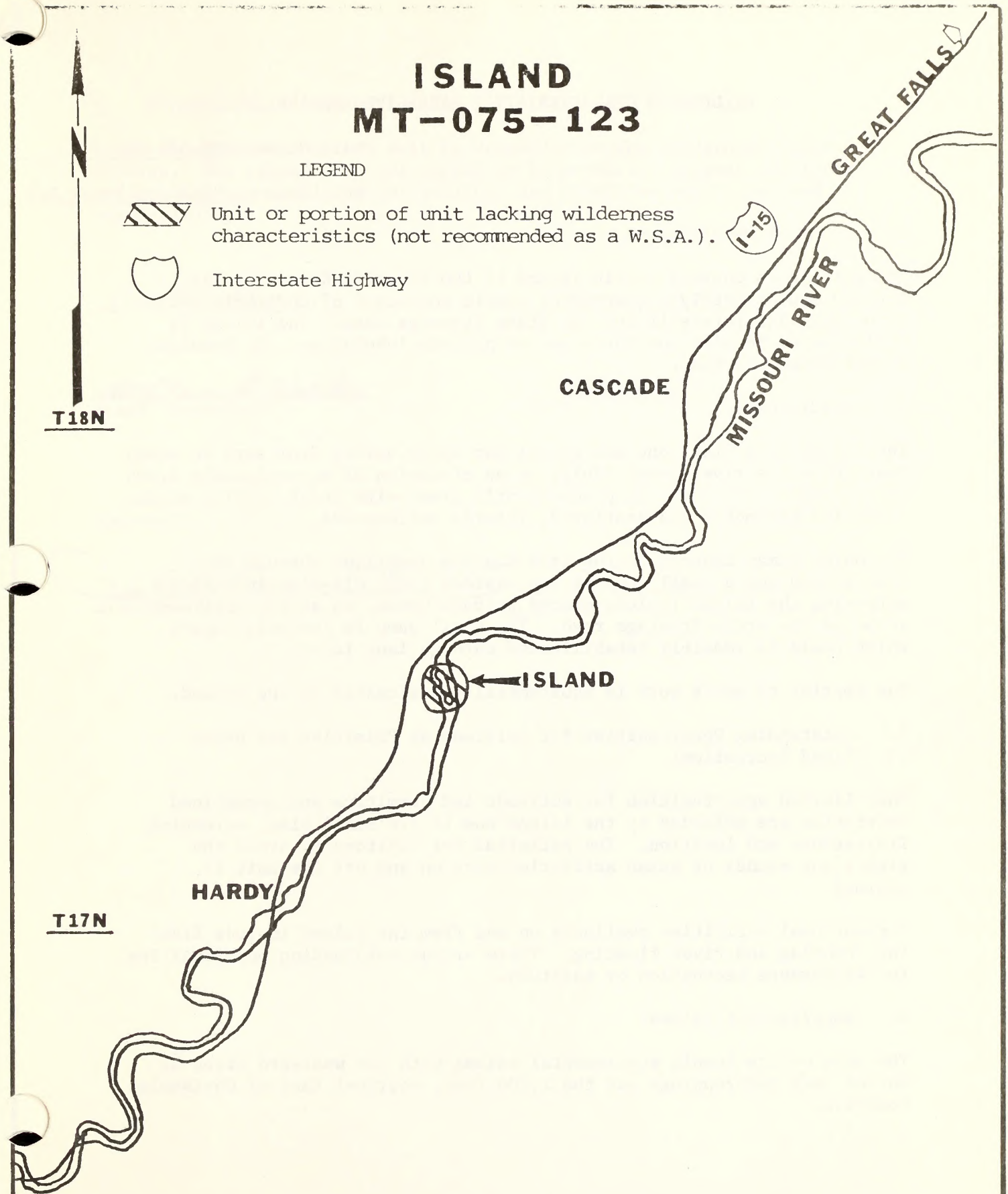
August 29, 1979

Approval

District Manager — Date

8/31/79

ISLAND
MT-075-123



WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-124

Unit Name Missouri River Isl.

1. Physical Description:

The unit is an unnamed public island in the Missouri River. It is located approximately a quarter of a mile southeast of Chrisholm Mountain along Interstate 15 and the State Frontage Road. The island is twelve acres in size and there are no private inholdings. No boundary adjustments were made.

2. Naturalness:

The island is a flat sand and gravel bar which varies from zero to seven feet above the river level (July) at an elevation of approximately 3,400 feet. Vegetative cover is predominantly grass with thick, willow shrubs along its perimeter and scattered, interim cottonwoods.

The major human impacts on the island are a powerline through the eastern end and a small dump on the western tip. Off-site intrusions affecting the island include nearby private homes, an active railroad, I-15 and the state frontage road. The small dump is the only impact which could be feasibly rehabilitated through land labor.

The imprint of man's work is substantially noticeable on the island.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Only limited opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are afforded by the island due to its small size, screening limitations and location. The potential for visitors to avoid the sights and sounds of human activities both on and off the unit is minimal.

Recreational activities available on and from the island include fishing, hunting and river floating. There are no outstanding opportunities for wilderness recreation or solitude.

4. Supplemental Values:

The unit offers scenic supplemental values with its westward views of unique rock outcroppings and the 1,200 foot, vertical face of Chrisholm Mountain.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

It is recommended that the unit be dropped from the Wilderness Review Process. The island does not appear to be primarily natural and lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation.

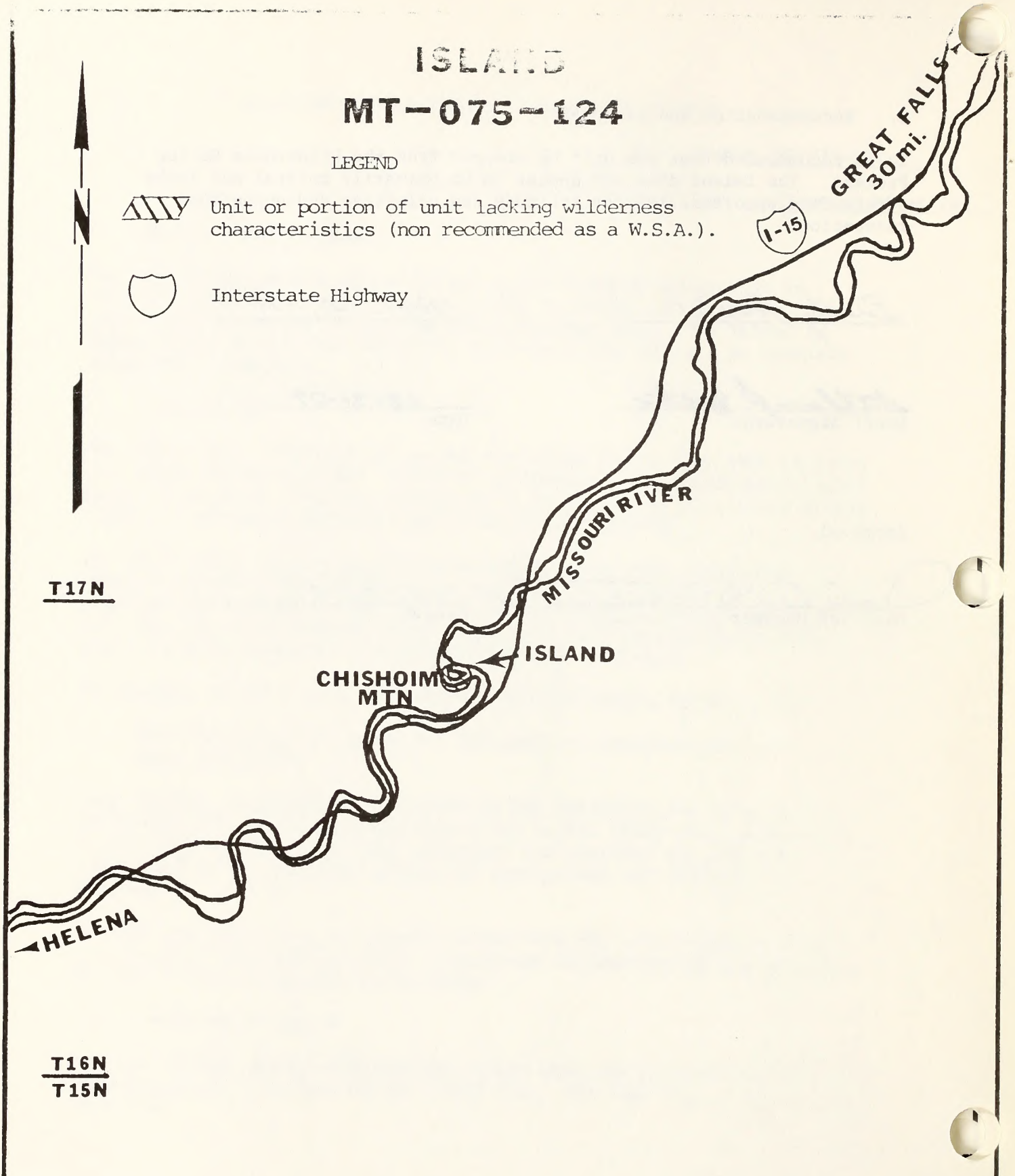
Bradley Rexford — August 31, 1979

Staff Signatures — Date: 08-31-79

Approval

District Manager — Date: 8/31/79

MT-075-124


LEGEND
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (non recommended as a W.S.A.).
Interstate Highway
I-15
GREAT FALLS
30 mi.
MISSOURI RIVER
ISLAND
CHISHOIM MTN
HELENA
T17N
T16N
T15N
R 3 W
R 2 W
R 1 W
Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-125

Unit Name Missouri River Island

1. Physical Description:

The unit is an unnamed island in the Missouri River. It is located about two miles north of Craig, Montana along Interstate 15. The island is five acres in size and there are no private inholdings. No boundary adjustments were made.

2. Naturalness:

The island is a flat gravel and sand bar which varies from zero to five feet above the river level (July) at an elevation of approximately 3,400 feet. Roughly eighty percent of the unit is densely vegetated by short willow groves. The remaining interior is grass covered. The major river channel flows west of the island.

No human impacts were found to exist on the island. Off-site intrusions within definite influential range include an active railroad, Interstate 15 and the state frontage road. These intrusions are all within a quarter of a mile.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Only limited opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are provided by the island due to its small size, screening limitations and location. The potential for visitors to avoid the sights and sounds of human activities both on and off the unit is minimal.

Recreational activities available from the island include fishing and river floating. There are no outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

4. Supplemental Values:

The island has no features of supplemental value.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

It is recommended that the unit be dropped from the wilderness review process. The island is not of natural quality based on off-site intrusions. In addition, it lacks outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation.

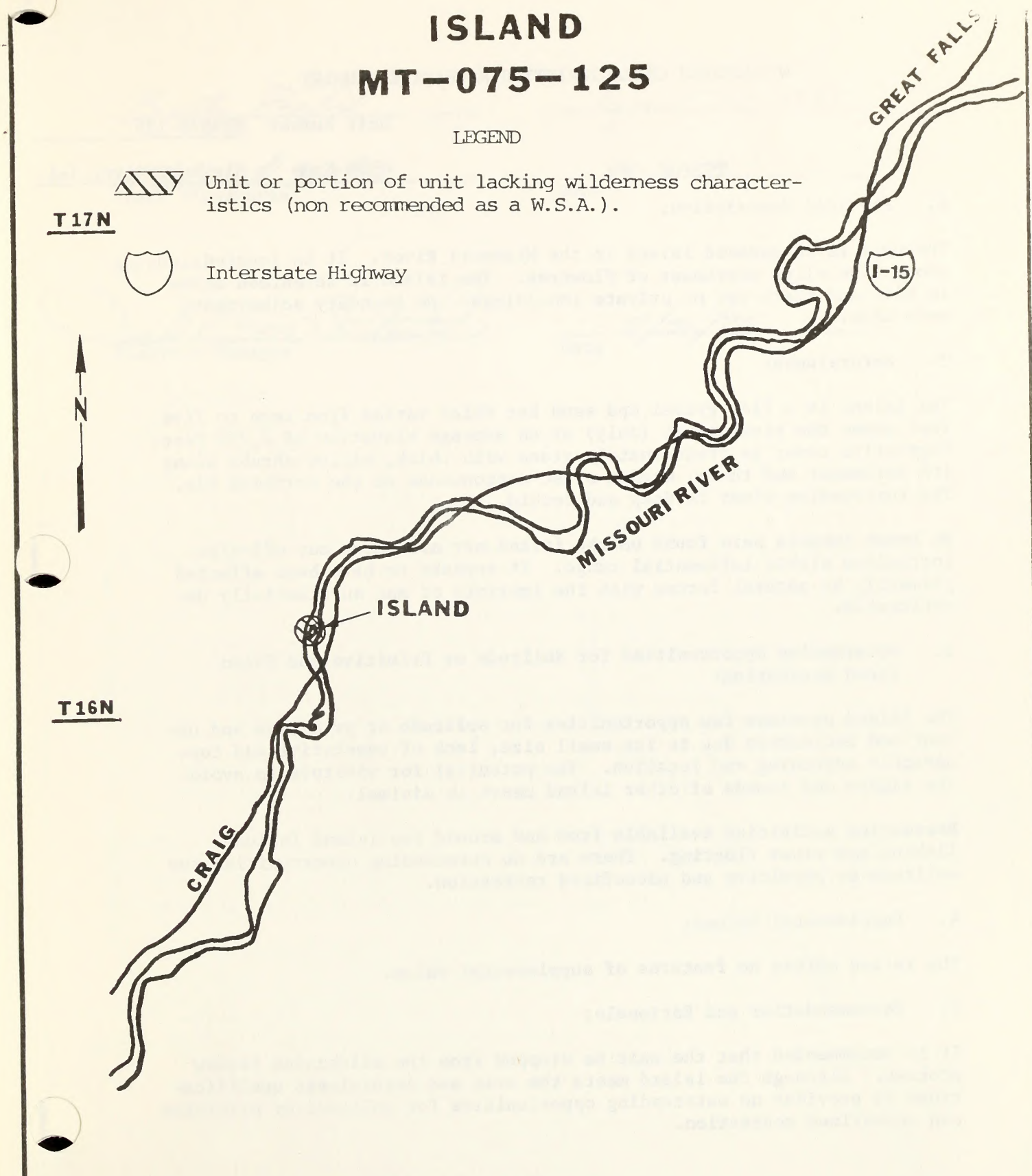
Bradley Rickford — August 29, 1979

Staff Signatures — Date: 08-31-79

Approval

District Manager — Date: 8/31/79

ISLAND
MT-075-125



WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-126

Unit Name Missouri River Isl.

1. Physical Description:

The unit is an unnamed island in the Missouri River. It is located about five miles southeast of Floweree. The island is seventeen acres in size and there are no private inholdings. No boundary adjustments were made.

2. Naturalness:

The island is a flat gravel and sand bar which varies from zero to five feet above the river level (July) at an average elevation of 2,750 feet. Vegetative cover is predominately grass with thick, willow shrubs along its perimeter and three, medium sized cottonwoods on the northern tip. The surrounding river is deep and turbid.

No human impacts were found on the island nor are there any off-site intrusions within influential range. It appears to have been affected primarily by natural forces with the imprints of man substantially unnoticeable.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The island provides few opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation due to its small size, lack of vegetative and topographic screening and location. The potential for visitors to avoid the sights and sounds of other island users is minimal.

Recreation activities available from and around the island include fishing and river floating. There are no outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

4. Supplemental Values:

The island offers no features of supplemental value.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

It is recommended that the unit be dropped from the wilderness review process. Although the island meets the size and naturalness qualifications it provides no outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

Bradley Rexford — August 27, 1979

Stephen P. Gobbs — 08-31-79

Staff Signatures — Date

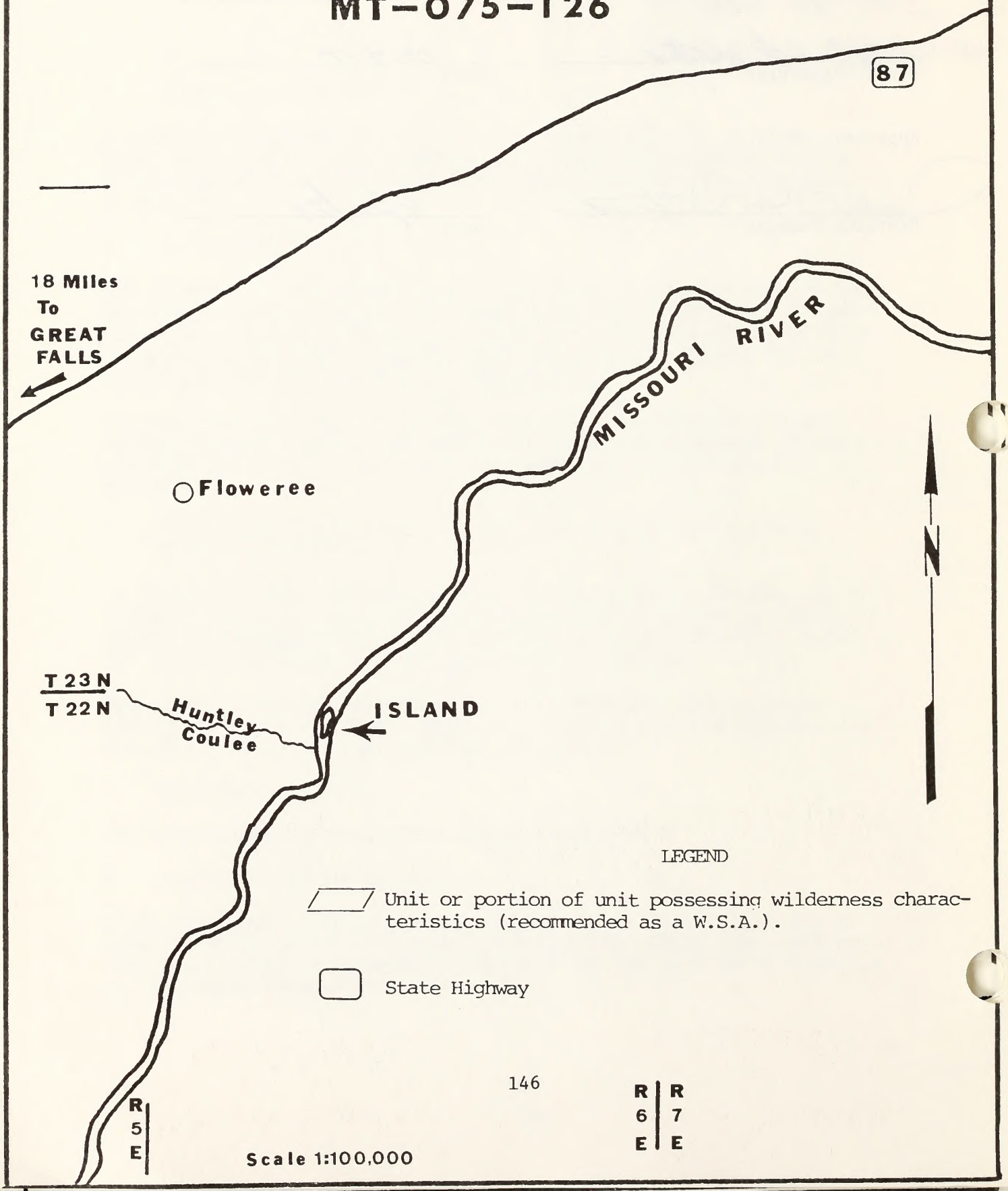
Approval

Jack A. McIntosh — 8/31/79

District Manager — Date

ISLAND

MT-075-126



WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-133

Unit Name Yellowstone River Island

1. Physical Description:

The unit is an unnamed public island in the Yellowstone River. It is located about two and one half miles northeast of Livingston, Montana. The island is fifty-three acres in size with no private inholdings. No boundary adjustments were made.

2. Naturalness:

The island is a relatively flat sand and gravel bar which varies from zero to ten feet above the river level (August) at an elevation of approximately 4,415 feet. The unit contains stands of cottonwoods with open, grassy understories, diverse communities of shrubs, open pockets of low growth plants, high water channels, marshy areas, several small ponds, and three sandy inlets. The main channel of the Yellowstone River flows along the north side of the island.

The only human impacts found were two old cars inconspicuously located on the east and west ends of the island. Off-site intrusions within close proximity include two private homes to the north and one small ranch to the south. No transportation routes are within influential range. In sum, the island appears to have been affected primarily by natural forces with man's imprint substantially unnoticeable.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are available on the island. Because of its large size, location, excellent vegetation screening and numerous accessible points, visitors can be easily separated from one another.

Recreation opportunities are outstanding on and from the unit. Game fishing in the surrounding Yellowstone River is outstanding as is canoeing and river floating. Because of the wide diversity of plant life and animals, opportunities for nature study, photography and fall hunting abound throughout the area.

4. Supplemental Values:

Due to the river surrounding the unit, undisturbed habitat for wildlife, and off-site vistas of the Absaroka and Crazy Mountains, ecogical, scientific and scenic values are available.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

It is recommended that the Yellowstone River Island receive further study. The unit appears primarily natural and possesses outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Finally, the island is of sufficient size to make practicable its preservation as wilderness.

Stanley Rickard — August 29, 1979

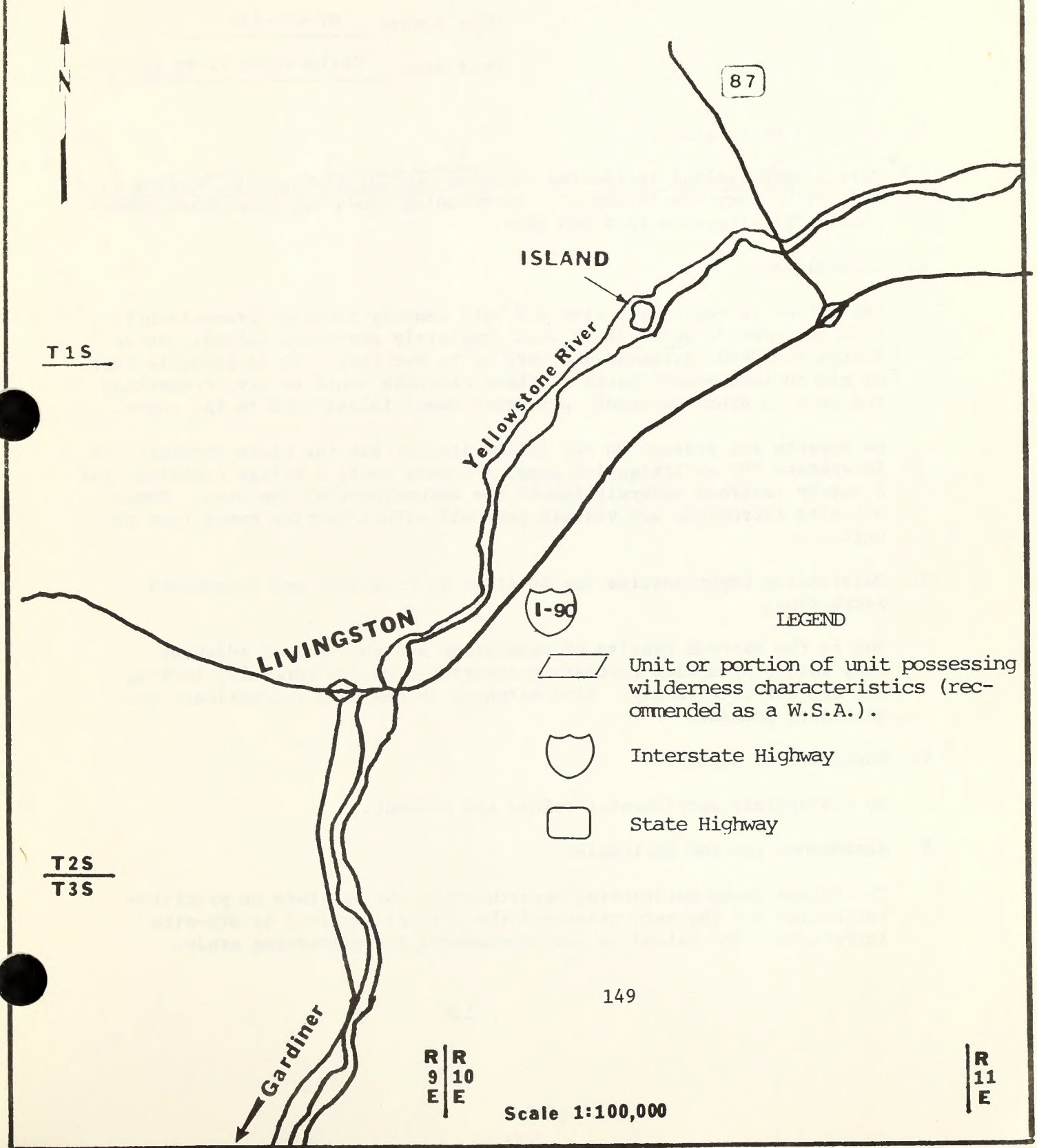
John Cincinnati — August 29 1979

Staff Signatures — Date

Approval

District Manager — 8/31/79 — Date

LAND
LAT-075-133



Wilderness Characteristics

Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-134

Unit Name Yellowstone River Island

1. Physical Description:

This 23 acre island is located 19 miles east of Livingston, Montana in T1S, R12E, Sections 15 and 22. Surrounding lands are in private ownership. The elevation is 4,220 feet.

2. Naturalness:

The island is relatively flat and very densely forested predominantly with cottonwoods and willows that completely cover the island. Water depths surrounding the island vary up to two feet. It is probable that by mid to late August parts of these channels would be dry, connecting the unit to other adjacent, privately owned islands and to the shore.

No impacts are present on the island itself, but the close proximity of Interstate 90, an irrigation pump, a County road, a bridge crossing, and a nearby railroad severely impair the naturalness of the area. These off-site intrusions are visible and well within hearing range from the unit.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Due to the extreme density of vegetation and the lack of adjacent deep water, primitive recreation opportunities are generally lacking and are not outstanding. Bird watching is the only recreational opportunity present.

4. Supplemental Values:

No discernible supplemental values are present.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

The island lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation and the naturalness of the unit is impaired by off-site intrusions. The island is not recommended for wilderness study.

Steffen P. Gates — August 23, 1979

Bradley Rigfel — August 29, 1979

Staff Signatures — Dates

Approval

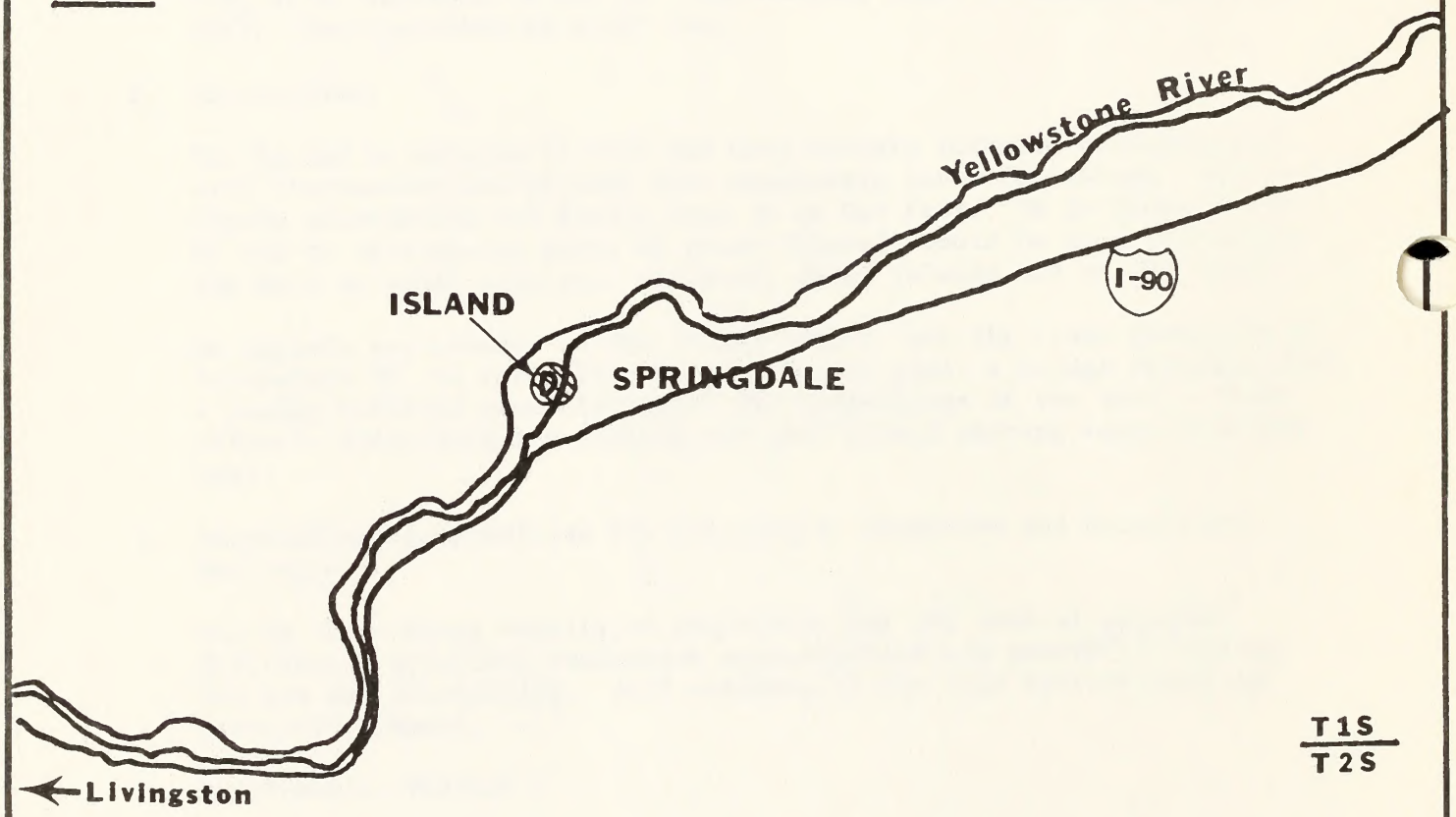
District Manager — 8/31/79 Date

ISLAND
MT-075-134

LEGEND

Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

Interstate Highway



R 11 E | R 12 E

Scale 1:100,000

R 12 E | R 13 E

Wilderness Characteristics

Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-138

Unit Name Missouri River Island

1. Physical Description:

This unit consists of two islands. The upstream island is approximately 10 acres and the downstream island is approximately 30 acres. They are located between 15 and 18 miles southeast of Townsend, Montana, and five miles apart. The downstream island is located in Toston Reservoir.

2. Naturalness:

The downstream island is in actuality a series of marshes, interlaced with water channels, cattail marshes, willow groves, and a few dead remnant trees from before the building of Toston Dam. The area appears to be rich in waterfowl habitat, and hole nesting birds have taken up residence in some of the dead trees protruding from the marsh. No impacts of man are present.

The upstream island is basically a flat, largely grass covered gravel bar with a few junipers and willows that cover about 20 percent of the area. Extensive grazing has occurred and negatively affects apparent naturalness. This island is connected to the western shore by a presently dry channel.

The naturalness of the islands is significantly affected by off-site impacts. The upper island is within definite sight and sound range of two railroads. The lower island is also visually and audibly affected by an adjacent railroad and a pump station just across the river to the northwest.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Primitive and unconfined recreation is limited on the islands. The downstream island is composed of marshes; walking on the island would be difficult, if not impossible. Primitive recreation opportunities here consist of fishing and the hunting and observation of waterfowl. Opportunities on the upstream island are similiarly lacking, and are limited to fishing and camping. Neither island provides outstanding opportunites.

4. Supplemental Values:

Nesting birds in the downstream island could have educational and scientific value, and the island itself is of scenic value.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

Due to significant off-site intrusions that negatively affect apparent naturalness, and the lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, neither island is recommended for further wilderness study.

Stephen P. Yates — August 23, 1979

Staff Signatures — Dates

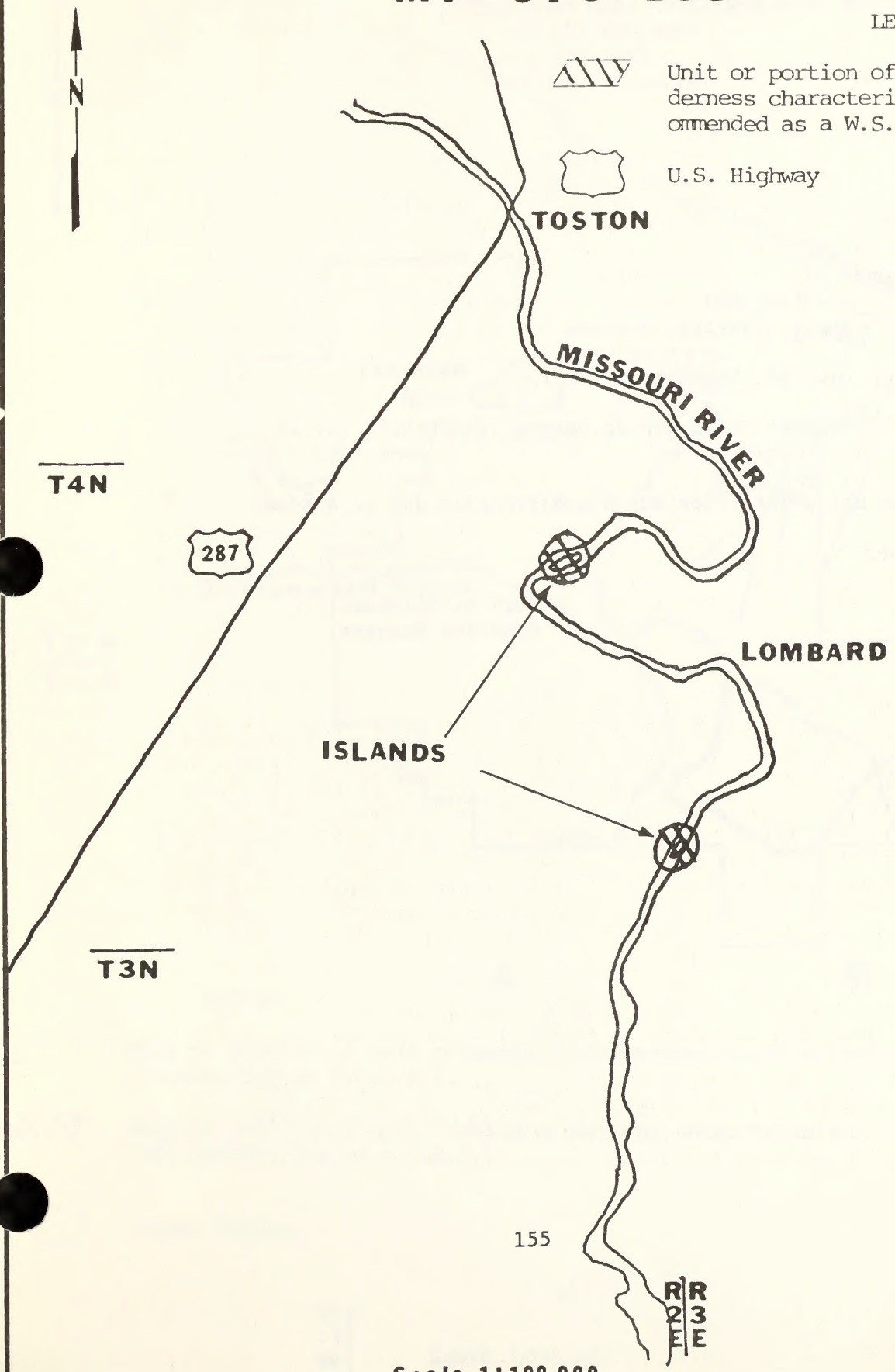
August 29, 1979

Approval

District Manager — 8/31/79 Date

ISLAND

MT-075-138



IN REPLY REFER TO

8500

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
District Office
Box 308
Butte, MT 59701

Memorandum

To: State Director, Montana

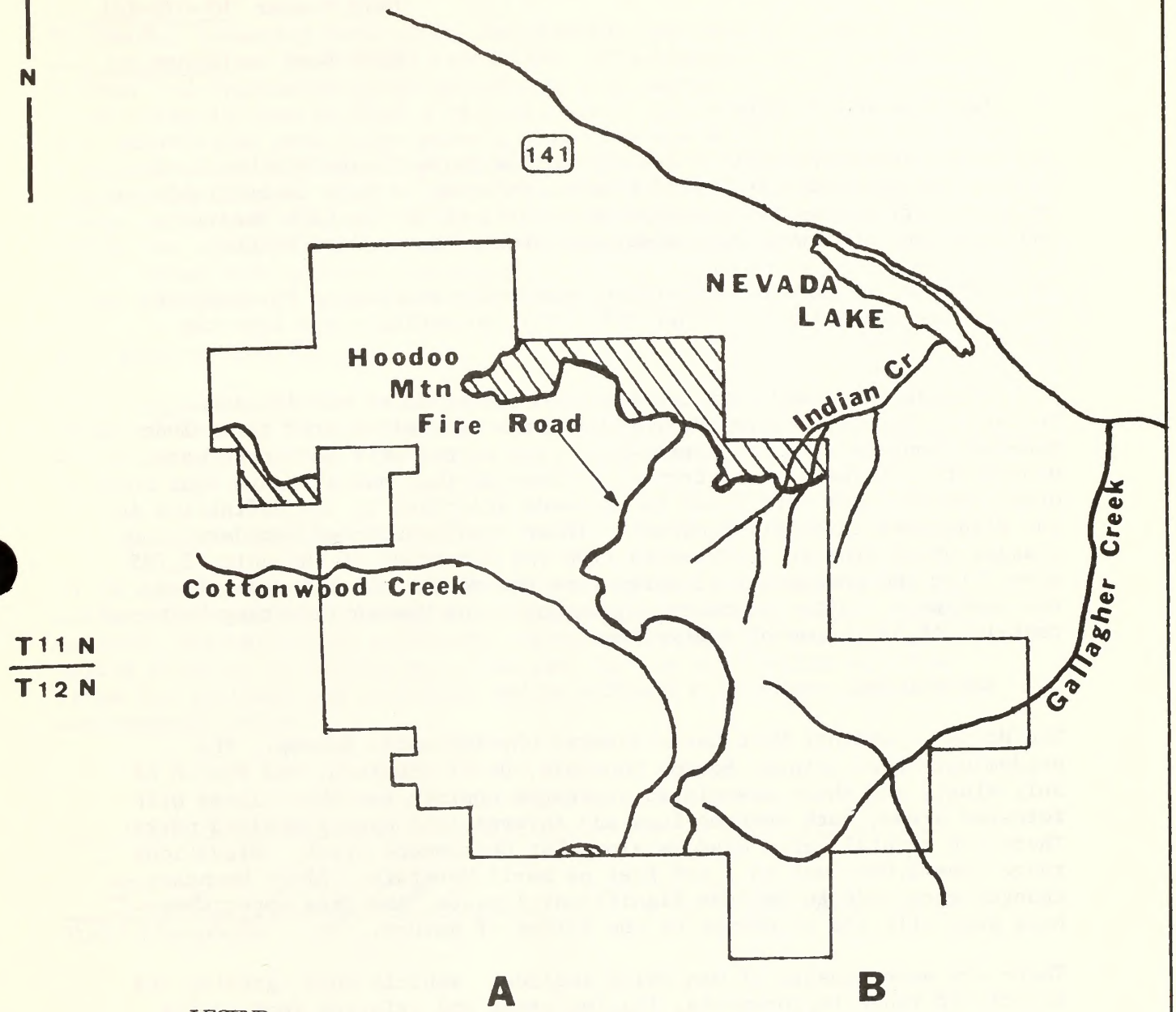
From: District Manager, Butte

Subject: Step 4, Intensive Inventory, Wilderness Review

This was not a rejection but a modification due to a road corridor.

Jack A. McIntosh
District Manager

HOODOO MOUNTAIN
MT-074-151 A AND B
REVISED DECISION



LEGEND

Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).

Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

State Highway

R 11 W

Scale 1:100,000

R 10 W

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-151

Unit Name Hoodoo

1. Physical Description:

The Hoodoo Inventory Unit is located in the Garnet Range southwest of Nevada Lake Reservoir in Powell County, Montana. Access is available by existing off highway 141 one-half mile north of Nevada Lake Reservoir and traveling southwest approximately three miles on dirt roads.

The northern, western, and southern boundaries are formed by roads and private and state lands. Other BLM lands containing roads form the eastern boundary.

The original inventory unit contained 18,600 acres of public land. During the intensive inventory, 7,078 acres were eliminated to exclude man-made impacts. In the northern portion of the unit 848 acres were dropped to eliminate scars from selective cutting and a road. Four other vehicle ways were found to be roads according to the definition in the Wilderness Inventory Handbook. These roads warranted boundary changes which dropped 2,270 acres from the northeast of the unit; 3,785 acres from the southeast; 15 acres from the south; and 160 acres from the northwest. After boundary adjustments, the Hoodoo Inventory Unit contains 11,522 acres of public land.

2. Naturalness:

The Hoodoo Inventory Unit has a diverse physiographic makeup. The predominate high points; Hoodoo Mountain, Devil Mountain, and Fourth of July Ridge, and their associated drainages contain variable slopes with forested areas, rock outcroppings and intermittent open grassland parks. There are several large meadows along Wet Cottonwood Creek. Elevations range from 5,000 feet to 7,438 feet on Devil Mountain. After boundary changes were made to exclude significant impacts, the area appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

There are some impacts of man which include: vehicle ways, grazing and associated range improvements, logging areas and existing foot trails believed to have been made 25-50 years ago by sheep herders. Due to the location of these minor impacts and the high degree of natural screening found throughout the unit they neither individually or cumulatively affect the apparent naturalness of the area. Some revegetation has already occurred in the logged areas and on the vehicle ways and through natural processes and minimal hand labor all the minor impacts could be rehabilitated.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The Hoodoo Inventory Unit offers outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The combination of varied terrain and vegetative cover provides a high degree of natural screening which makes it easy to find a secluded spot. The densely forested areas and intermittent open grass parks and meadows are excellent habitat for a variety of wildlife which provides outstanding opportunities for sightseeing of these zoological features as well as bird watching, nature study and big game hunting. Excellent opportunities for day hiking are available because of the diverse physiographic makeup of the unit. Other recreational activities available include: rock scrambling, photography, horseback riding and fishing in Cottonwood Creek.

4. Supplemental Values:

Of ecological value are the numerous game and nongame species that inhabit the area. It is believed that the rare martin, fisher, and wolverine are present. The marked foot trails made by sheepherders 25-50 years ago are of historical value.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

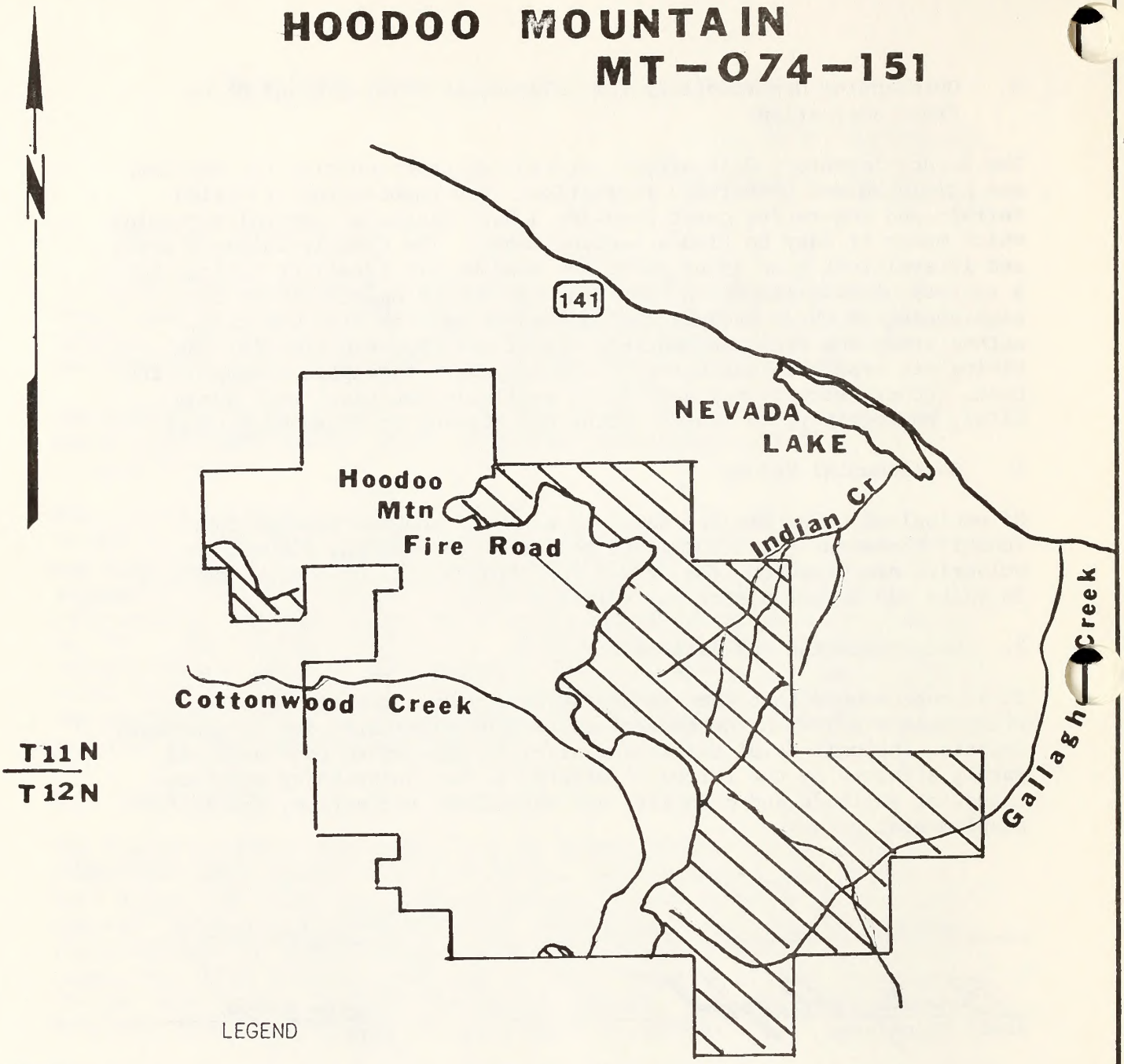
It is recommended that the Hoodoo Inventory Unit receive further wilderness study with the exception of lands eliminated due to man-made impacts. The unit is of sufficient size; it appears to have been primarily affected by the forces of nature; it has outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation; and it has supplemental values.

[signature]	08/31/79
Bradley Rickford	08-31-79
Staff Signatures	Date

Approval

District Manager	Date

HOODOO MOUNTAIN
MT-074-151



LEGEND

Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).

Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

State Highway

R 11 W

R 10 W

Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-074-151B

Unit Name Gallagher Creek

1. Physical Description:

The Gallagher Creek Inventory Unit encompasses an area of 5,927 roadless acres of public land administered by the BLM. The unit is bordered to the west by the Hoodoo Mountain Fire Road, and to the north, east, and south by both private and State lands. The unit is also adjacent to the Hoodoo Inventory Unit 151A. The area is located in the Garnet Range, southwest of Nevada Lake Reservoir in Powell County, Montana. Access to the area is via exiting State Highway 141 ½ mile north of Nevada Lake Reservoir, and heading south for 3 miles on dirt roads.

2. Naturalness:

The Gallagher Creek Unit appears to be predominantly natural in character. It ranges in elevation from 5,240' to 7,016', transected in many areas by the Indian Creek and Gallagher Creek drainages. The unit is covered by coniferous forest with very few open meadows or rocky bluffs and screes.

There are imprints of human activity on the unit, of a relatively minor nature; one impact required a boundary change to exclude it. Those imprints remaining are 1 vehicle way, and 6 small, short spurs off it. Neither singly nor cumulatively are any of the imprints significant or distracting from the area's apparent naturalness. The area is otherwise undeveloped and retains its pristine nature.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation on the Gallagher Creek Inventory Unit are outstanding. The 2 major drainages and their tributaries encourage visitor use dispersal. The distribution of coniferous forest throughout the unit adds additional screening, promoting excellent opportunities for solitude. The unit's topography and scenery make activities such as hiking, backpacking, sightseeing, and photography of exceptional quality. The wildlife offer an additional excellent opportunity for nature study and hunting.

4. Supplemental Values:

The area is known to be critical habitat for many species of wildlife. Elk, mule deer, black bear, whitetail deer, mountain lion and moose inhabit the area, as well as numerous non-game species.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

The Gallagher Creek Inventory Unit is recommended for further study as a WSA. Its 5,927 roadless acres is of sufficient size, and it remains apparently natural in character with no substantially noticeable imprints of human activity. The area offers outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. It also has an ecological supplemental value in that it supports populations of various wildlife.

Richard E. Ward — 9/10/79

Phoebe Patterson — 9/10/79

Staff Signatures — Date

Approval

District Manager — Date 9/10/79

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-074-155

Unit Name Quigg West

1. Physical Description:

The Quigg West Inventory Unit is located twenty miles northwest of Philipsburg, Montana. Public access to the area is via the Rock Creek Road. The unit is bordered to the north and west by public land administered by the USDA Forest Service, and to the south and east by private lands. The unit's boundary encloses 520 roadless acres, all of which are public land. It is contiguous to the Forest Service RARE II Area Q1-807, Quigg, of 60,050 acres which was recommended for wilderness. The combined acreage of the Quigg West Inventory Unit and the RARE II Area, Quigg, would be 60,570 roadless acres.

2. Naturalness:

The Quigg West Unit is entirely in its natural state. The unit ranges in elevation from 4920' to 6930', and is transected by two steep gulches. The unit is covered by Douglas fir forests, primarily on higher ridges, with forbs and shrubs lining the drainages. There are no signs of any human use of the unit, either past or present.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The Quigg West Unit offers outstanding opportunities for solitude. The two steep drainages aid visitor use dispersal and enable isolation. The forested areas accentuate the topographic opportunities for privacy and solitude. Those primitive and unconfined types of recreation best suited for this area are hiking, hunting, photography, and nature study. However, these opportunities are only of a moderate quality.

4. Supplemental Values:

The Quigg West Inventory Unit is known to support populations of bighorn sheep, elk, and mule deer yearlong.

5. Recommendation and Rationale:

The Quigg West Inventory Unit is recommended for further study as a WSA. Its contiguity to the Forest Service RARE II Area, Quigg, creates an area of 60,570 roadless acres. It is completely natural in character, and provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. The unit also provides critical habitat for wildlife.

Phoebe J. Patterson — Aug. 29, 1979

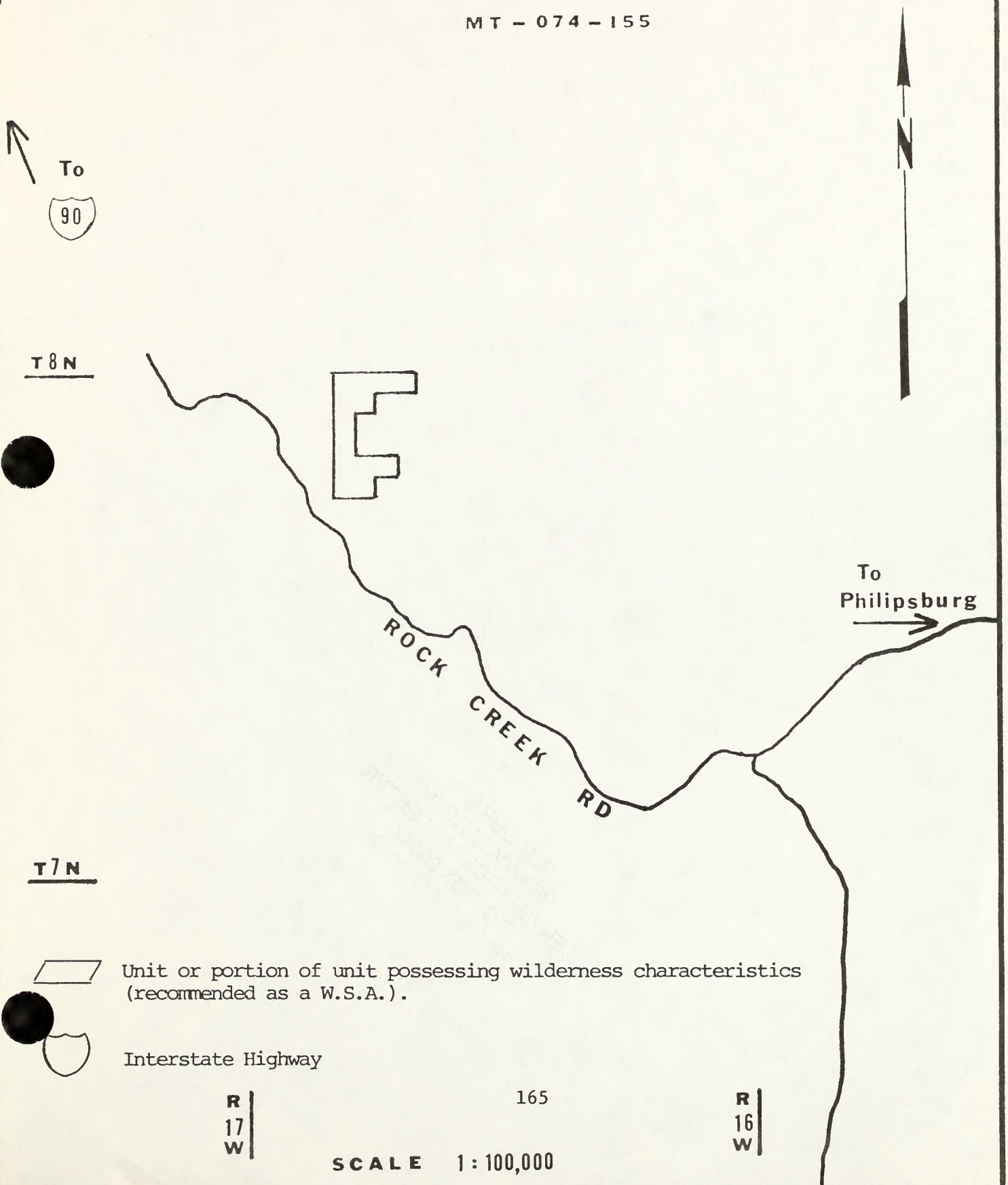
Staff Signatures — Date: 08-29-79

Approval

District Manager — Date: 8/31/79

QUIGG WEST TACKON

MT - 074 - 155



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46° 00'

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47° 00'

KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST

LINCOLN

GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

BLACKFEET INDIAN RESERVATION

GLACIER

TOOLE

HILL

Whitefish

FLATHEAD

KALISPELL

Shelby

Cut Bank

PONDERA

Conrad

FLATHEAD LAKE

SANDERS

FLATHEAD INDIAN RESERVATION

LAKE

MINERAL

MISSOULA

POWELL

LEWIS AND CLARK

TETON

CHOUTEAU

Choteau

Port Benton

GREAT FALLS

CASCADE

FERGUS

JUDITH BASIN

Lonesome Prairie

Big Sandy

Moccasin

Geyser

Stanford

Hobson

Judith Gap

Ryegate

Harlowton

WHEATLAND

Harlowton

GRANITE

Philipsburg

Drummond

Helena

East Helena

Townsend

Toston

Canyon Ferry Reservoir

Gates of the Mountains

Wilderness

Holter Lake

Hauser Lake

Lake Helena

Missouri River

Sun River

Teton River

Marias River

Milk River

Big Blackfoot River

Clark Fork

Flathead River

Swan River

Bitterroot River

Rocky Mountain Front

Continental Divide

Lewis and Clark Trail

Yellowstone Trail

Old Trail

Old Yellowstone Trail

Old Spanish Trail

Old Mullan Road

Old Mullan Trail

Old Mullan Pass

Old Mullan Tunnel

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

MONTANA WILDERNESS INVENTORY

PROPOSED DECISION MAP
OVERTHRUST BELT
SEPTEMBER 1979

Scale 1:500,000
1 inch equals approximately 8 miles

10 0 10 20 30 40 Miles
10 0 10 20 30 40 50 Kilometers

Contour interval 500 feet
Datum is mean sea level

Compiled, edited, and published by the Geological Survey. 1927 North American datum
Lambert conformal conic projection based on standard parallels 33° and 45°

LEGEND

- State capital
- County seat
- City, town, or village
- Scheduled service airport
- Interstate highway
- U.S. highway
- State highway
- Other principal roads

POPULATION KEY

GREAT FALLS	more than 50,000
MISSOULA	10,000 to 50,000
Lewistown	2,500 to 10,000
Fort Benton	1,000 to 2,500
Stanford	less than 1,000

Population indicated by size of letters

LEGEND

- Proposed Wilderness Study Area
- Units proposed to be dropped from wilderness consideration
- Forest Service Lands

NOTE: Refer to ½" = 1 mile maps for specific detail recommendations. Maps are included with narrative summary.

BUTTE DISTRICT

WALES CREEK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

* U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1979—699-814

46°
00′